

THE

# Manchester Quarterly

A JOURNAL

OF

LITERATURE AND ART.



## Contents :

	PAGE.
I.—Randolph Caldecott. With Illustrations. By WILLIAM CLOUGH...	197
II.—On Ghost Stories. By Rev. W. A. O'CONOR, B.A....	211
III.—Methods of Literary Work :—	
V.—Times and Seasons of Authorship. By C. E. TYRER ...	247
VI.—On Some Conditions of Authorship. By JOHN MORTIMER.	253
IV.—A Naturalist's Sabbath. By THOMAS KAY ...	269
V.—The Art of Seeing. With Illustration. By WILLIAM ROBINSON ...	275
VI.—A Summer Call to the Mountains. By ABRAHAM STANSFIELD ...	290

PUBLISHED FOR

THE MANCHESTER LITERARY CLUB

BY

JOHN HEYWOOD, MANCHESTER AND LONDON.

TRÜBNER AND CO. LONDON.

Price One Shilling.

All Rights Reserved.

# MANCHESTER QUARTERLY ADVERTISER.

JULY, 1886.

*NOTICE.*—Communications intended for the Editor may be addressed to Mr. Axon, Fern Bank, Higher Broughton,

Business letters, orders, &c., should be sent to the publisher, Mr. JOHN HEYWOOD, Deansgate and Ridgefield, Manchester; and 11, Paternoster Buildings, London.

## SULPHOLINE LOTION

A CURE FOR SKIN DISEASES.

There is scarcely any eruption but will yield to "Sulpholine" in a few days, and commence to fade away, even if seemingly past cure. Ordinary pimples, redness, blotches, scurf, roughness, vanish as if by magic; whilst old enduring skin disorders, eczema, psoriasis, rosea, prurigo, tetter, pityriasis, however deeply rooted, "Sulpholine" successfully attacks. It destroys the animalculæ which mostly cause these unsightly, irritable, painful affections, and always produces a clear, smooth, supple, healthy skin. "Sulpholine" Lotion is sold by most Chemists.—Bottles, 2s. 9d.

## PEPPER'S QUININE AND IRON TONIC

FOR GAINING STRENGTH,

Rouses and develops the nervous energies, enriches the blood, promotes appetite, dispels languor and depression, fortifies the digestive organs. Is a specific remedy for neuralgia, indigestion, fevers, chest affections, and wasting diseases, &c. The whole frame is greatly invigorated by Pepper's Tonic, the mental faculties brightened, and the constitution greatly strengthened.—Bottles, 32 doses, 4s. 6d. Sold by all Chemists everywhere. Insist upon having Pepper's Tonic only, not that of the Chemist's own compounding.

## TARAXACUM AND PODOPHYLLIN

A LIVER MEDICINE.

In all cases of congestion or liver complaint it sets the sluggish liver in action, moves the stomach very gently, indeed giving a sense of clearness and comfort within a few hours. The symptoms of liver derangement, headache, torpidity, costiveness, flatulence, heartburn, sense of over-repletion, shoulder pains, repugnance to food, general discomfort, and depression are quickly dispelled by TARAXACUM and PODOPHYLLIN, a fluid extract of medicinal roots, prepared solely by J. PEPPER, Bedford Laboratory, London. Insist on having the correct preparation. Bottles 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d. Sold by Chemists everywhere.

## LOCKYER'S SULPHUR HAIR RESTORER.

THE BEST. THE SAFEST. THE CHEAPEST.

Restores the Colour to Grey Hair. Instantly Stops the Hair from Fading. Occasionally used, Greyness is impossible.

LARGE BOTTLES, 1/6 EACH. SOLD EVERYWHERE.





*From a Drawing by Randolph Caldecott.*





## RANDOLPH CALDECOTT.

BY WILLIAM CLOUGH.

THERE was issued in 1876 by Messrs. Macmillan, a book with illustrations that forcibly drew attention to the advent of a new exponent of the pictorial art. These pictures were of so entirely new a nature, and gave such a meaning and emphasis to the text, as to stir even callous bosoms by the graceful and pure creations of the artist's genius. The admirable literary work of Washington Irving's *Old Christmas* was made alive for us by a new interpreter, who brought grace of drawing, with a dainty inventive genius, to the delineation of the gifted American's sketches of our English life of the last century. This was followed in the next year by a continuation of the theme in *Bracebridge Hall*, which sustained the success of the first volume. This second book proved that the first venture of Mr. Caldecott was not a flash in the pan, a mere brilliant effort which had exhausted itself at the premier attempt, but the beginning of a career which was likely to become famous, to delight our eyes, and to enrich our memories. How far these anticipations have been justified is to be seen in the various notices which have appeared in the public press on the death of the gifted artist, which took place on the 12th of February, 1886, at St. Augustines, Florida, whither he had gone for health, sketching for the *Graphic* en route.

THE MANCHESTER QUARTERLY. No. XIX.—JULY, 1886.

Mr. Caldecott was born in Bridge Street, Chester, on the 22nd of March, 1846, his father being an accountant of some standing. He was educated at the King's School there, under the mastership of Mr. James Harris, who used to show with some pride a sketch in an old Virgil by his young pupil, of Æneas carrying off his father Anchises from the ruin of Troy. His earliest published drawing, so far as I can find, is of the burning of the Queen's Hotel, Chester, which was published in the *Illustrated London News* in November, 1861. He became head boy of the school. During these days he was a diligent student of the School of Art, under the training of Mr. Davidson, but his best lessons were learned in the fields. From his earliest years he noted what he saw. Drawing all things, modelling in clay or carving in wood the birds and animals he loved so well, his days were one long series of studies made direct from Nature. In noting the career of Mr. Caldecott one cannot help being struck by the varied nature of his experience, and the many opportunities he had of studying urban and rural life. His memory was retentive. Almost all that he did in the way of book illustrating afterwards bears evidence of this gift.

School-life being over he was placed in the Whitechurch and Ellesmere Bank. Here the work was not hard. A great part of each day was spent in the open air. Hunting, shooting, and fishing were at his disposal, and very eagerly these advantages were enjoyed. We, who knew him, can well understand how welcome he must have been in many a cottage, farm, and hall. The handsome lad carried his own recommendation. With light brown hair falling with a ripple over his brow, blue-grey eyes shaded by long lashes, sweet and mobile mouth, tall and well made, he joined to these physical advantages a gay good humour and a charming disposition. No wonder then that he was a general favourite.





*From a Drawing by Randall ph. Catlecott.*

In 1867 he came to Manchester, and another field was opened for him in which to gain knowledge. In the Manchester and Salford Bank he speedily became esteemed. The cheerful kindness, playful wit, keen observation, and delicate humour, which distinguished him here, never deserted him; they only deepened with his growth. In a bank in a large commercial centre like this, all sorts and conditions of men are to be seen. The motley crowds soon were transferred by Mr. Caldecott on to blotting paper, backs of used envelopes, or any other substance which could be marked by pen and ink. There were turbaned Turks, wily Greeks, swart Armenians, financing Jews, and Manchester men to exercise his skill. These rapid sketches, with open-handed generosity, frequently rewarded the victims who made his additions while the artist drew. Rarely did he illustrate the foibles of his fellows (in later life he made it a rule never to do so), but once he did. A clerk being asked if he could use a revolver (this was at the time of the Fenian troubles), replied, "Oh, yes. In Ceylon I've often shot snipe and elephants on the wing." Unlucky sentence. On the back of an envelope, with rapid pen, the scene was drawn. The unfortunate clerk was blazing away at a couple of flying elephants. One hit fairly in the side has his flight arrested, the other, with trunk outstretched and loudly trumpeting, sails safely away. This sketch shows quick imagination and inventive faculty. The elephants are not burdened with incongruous wings; the ears are only slightly enlarged for that office, and really, on paper, the event does not look so improbable after all. This sketch, I am glad to say, is reproduced here.

During the time he was in Manchester Mr. Caldecott worked very hard, drawing from Nature at all available times, painting in water-colour and in oil—in the latter medium hunting scenes principally, and at least one portrait.

He was a student at our School of Art. Often has he worked almost the night through, qualifying himself for the successes of a few years later by earnest work of the severest kind. Not more for his skill in drawing than for his charm as a man was he esteemed. Better companion never was—a good teller of a humorous tale, a patient listener, and a really good reciter, wherever he went he was gladly accepted. In 1868 he illustrated a local serio-comic paper, the *Will o' the Wisp*, which came to an untimely end—not the first of its class, nor the last, which has gone and shall yet go the same sad way. This was a monthly issue. In that for July, 1868, there is a cartoon with the famous initials "R. C." in the corner. It is entitled "Latest Apparition. The Will o' the Wisp."—"Though this be madness, yet there is method in it." On the left of the picture is a lad with a lighted lantern in one hand, under the other arm is a bundle bearing the title of the paper. In various attitudes of amazement are the other comic papers of that day. *Punch* has dropped his cigar; *Fun* scratches his head; *Judy*, spectacles on nose, with clenched hands glares at the new comer; *Free Lance* grimly tugs at his moustachios; *Tomahawk* yells; and the dazed *Owl* flies away. They did not all die—some even survive to this day. On the first page of that number, under the title, is the quotation, which varied with each month, and strangely prophetic does that one now read:—

The heights by great men reached and kept,  
Were not attained by sudden flight;  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward in the night.

In 1869 he also contributed to another local paper—the *Sphinx*—drawings in which the germs of Mr. Caldecott's genius are to be found.

Bearing an introductory letter to the editor of *Punch*,

he went up to London on a flying visit, carrying with him a sketch on wood and a small book of drawings of the "Fancies of a Wedding." He was well received. The sketch was accepted, and with many compliments the book of drawings was detained. "From that day to this," said Mr. Caldecott, "I have not seen either sketch or book." Some time after, on meeting Mark Lemon, the incident was recalled, when the burly, jovial editor replied, "My dear fellow, I am vagabondising to-day, not Punching." I don't think Mr. Caldecott rightly appreciated that joke. Encouraged by many friends, and having, as he said, "money enough for a year or so," he left Manchester for London in 1872.

The habit of earnest study from life which had characterised him hitherto, was continued in London. With the familiar sketch-book in hand, the streets, parks, theatres, and all places of public resort were frequented, and yielded a rich harvest to his cunning hand. Some good work was done for *London Society*, and Mr. Blackburn gave great encouragement and assistance at this time. M. Dalou, the eminent French sculptor, took a great liking for him, and gave many valuable hints and lessons in the art of modelling. He speedily numbered among his friends Charles Keene, Du Maurier, and Professor Armstrong. For a few months the Slade School of Art saw him as a student. In 1873 Mr. Blackburn produced a volume on the *Harz Mountains* containing some drawings by Mr. Caldecott. In this year he was in Vienna sketching for the *New York Daily Graphic*. *Baron Bruno*, a collection of fairy tales by Louisa Morgan, was illustrated in 1875. Between these years much time was spent at the Zoological Gardens studying animals and especially birds. Some terra cotta statuettes were the result of these studies. "Save up," he writes, "and be an art patron. You will soon be able to

buy some interesting terra cottas by R. C." The year 1875 saw his first great success. Mr. J. D. Cooper, the eminent wood engraver, asked him to illustrate *Old Christmas*. The success was immediate, the fame great. We all know these lovely drawings, from quaint Master Simon downwards. In a sketch at the head of a letter of December, 1875, he represents himself as being shaved. The barber's apron bears the words "The Reviewer," and on the lather pot is the label "Soft Soap." Against the wall, drawn by a few telling lines, is a dog—such as only Caldecott could draw—which seems to be absorbing all the praise. This was followed in the next year by *Bracebridge Hall*. The great charm of these drawings is a subtle one. There is beauty, humour, and truth; but over and above all, there is a something of such a rare and delicate flavour that it is more easily appreciated than described. The Academy Exhibition of 1876 held his first important oil painting—that of the "Three Ravens," which found a purchaser. The first pair of Mr. R. Caldecott's Picture Books appeared in 1878. The vein struck here proved rich. The drawings revolutionised the illustrating of our nursery legends. Wit, fancy, and invention (*the happy finding of Ruskin*) were brought together for us to admire and to delight our children. The *Times* reviewer says:—

The child who receives as a Christmas present either the *Diverting History of John Gilpin*, or the *House that Jack Built*, as illustrated by R. Caldecott—or both, if so much happiness is permitted to childhood—will be an uncommonly fortunate child. We feel inclined to give the preference to the *House that Jack Built*, if only for the sake of that inimitable dog, chuckling over his late successful passage of arms with the cat, unconscious of the near approach of the avenging cow, whose crumpled horn he is soon so painfully to feel. The expression of satisfaction on that dog's face no words can adequately portray.

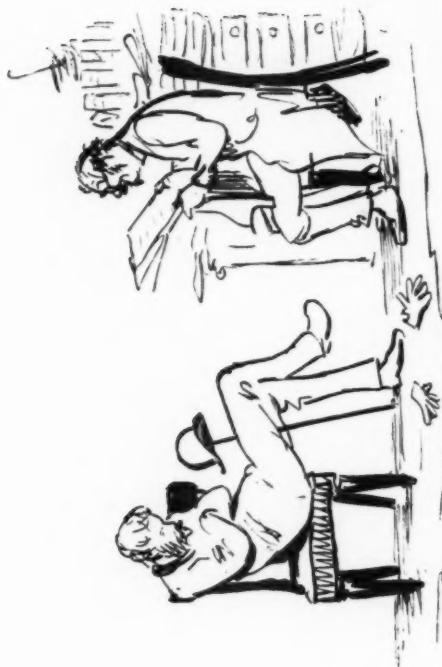
From Cannes he writes, December, 1878:—

Two or three notices have been read by the visitors to this hotel, and I am asked if I am any relation to the gifted artist. 30,000 of each book delivered





*From a Drawing by Randolph Culleriff.*



"MR. COOPER (THE WOOD ENGRAVER) INSISTED ON READING ALL THE LAUDATORY REVIEWS ON 'OLD CHRISTMAS.'"  
*From a Drawing by Randolph Childcott.*

to Christmas, more expected to sell straight away. Hope so. I get a small royalty—a small, small royalty.

By the kindness of Messrs. Routledge I am able to say that over 800,000 of these picture books have been sold.

In these books the artist has taken for his subjects what we thought we knew so well, and showed us our ignorance. These are no fresh fantastic themes, but the common objects of our nursery literature seen through the medium of genius, which henceforward have a new meaning for us all.

In this year he painted a hunting picture, which was bought by Mr. Mundella, the President of the Board of Trade, who writes of it:—

The picture bought by me of poor Caldecott was purchased in 1878. I think it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in that year, but I bought it from his easel. It is an oil painting, 3ft. 6in. by 2ft. 9in., and the subject is the "Three Jolly Huntsmen." I remember his bringing the song to my house after the purchase, and reading the song with great enjoyment, pointing out to us how he had illustrated the verse, "We hunted and we holloed till the setting of the sun." My little granddaughter (Millais' "Dorothy Thorpe") was his model for several of his Christmas Books. She is the little girl in *Sing a Song of Sixpence* and several others, and possesses copies sent by him with little sketches and dedications. He is indeed a national loss.

Blackburn's *Breton Folk* was published in 1880. For this work Caldecott made no fewer than 170 drawings. The tailpiece to the preface represents him sketching in Brittany surrounded by children. One of them is encircled by his arm—an evidence, if one was wanting, of the kindly nature of the man. This book abounds in pictures of the rural life of quaint Brittany, full of a happy humour, with many delightful hints of landscape and felicitous glimpses of the beauties to be found there. "The Successful Student Crowned and Embraced by a Bearded and Medalled General"—"The Pigheadedness of Pigs," and their contrariness generally, even when squeaking in a foreign language—"The Wayside Well"—"The Village Dance"—"The Noonday Rest," all are here illuminated by the light

of a kindly genius. This was also the year of his happy marriage to a daughter of Mr. F. W. Brind, of St. Mary's Cray, Kent. The principal book illustrations after this were *Some of Æsop's Fables—with Modern Instances*, *The Sketch Book*, the series of Picture Books and the vignettes to Edwin Waugh's Collected Works. Of *Æsop's Fables* he wrote, saying:—

Do not expect much from this book. When I see the proofs of it I wonder and regret that I did not approach the subject more seriously. It is really "light" for the most part.

It may be so; yet his translations of the fables into modern instances are excellent. Take that of the "Fox and Crow." The introductory drawing is a crawling fox, with tail arched yet drooping, half-closed cunning eyes, mouth wreathed into an insinuating grin, and yet, for all this, a veritable fox. Then comes the fable itself. The crow sits on a branch of a tree, with a piece of cheese in its beak, looking askew at the wheedling fox below. Now come, in two small drawings, the modern instances. The first represents a matron and her daughter seated on a couch, and a young elegant on a chair pointing to a piano, and evidently asking the elder lady to sing. The second drawing shows the success of the wily suggestion. The mother sits at the piano singing (of course, with her back to the young couple), the young gentleman has taken her place on the couch and is tenderly kissing the young lady's hand. The tailpiece shows the cawing crow with empty beak on the tree.

In the *English Illustrated Magazine* of March last there is a paper entitled "Fox Hunting by a Man in a Round Hat," written and illustrated by Mr. Caldecott. These pictures of hunting scenes are as fine as anything he has done. The drawing of the horses and dogs is masterly. The landscapes are, as usual, admirable for their fidelity, and the humour of the hunter alighting on a heap of

turnips, instead of on the solid ground, is as genial as anything he has done. In addition to these books, the page of the *Graphic* contain much of his most characteristic work. The "Scarborough" series, with their gaiety, dancing, and love-making; the "Story of the Rivals," with its termination of the lover gazing at the "fine girl's" miniature in a box at the "old place" in Fleet Street, while some of the frequenters of the tavern join in the contemplation over the top of the division; the "Monaco" episode; the tender idyll of "Our Haymaking," where, in the last scene, the final "Merry Making O!" the three couples dance in the evening to the music of the old gentleman's clarionet and the old lady's concertina—are all full of grace, sweetness, and kindness.

In modelling in terra cotta Mr. Caldecott has done some notable things. The effects obtained in baked clay are not to be compared with those of marble. The luminosity of marble is necessary in the greatest art. By its aid the texture of the skin can only be rightly shown, and the reflected lights of human limb upon limb, add greatly to the pleasure in looking at a fine statue. Besides these advantages the artist's work is up to the last personal—he can add a final grace at the end. These are all wanting in terra cotta. The artist cannot retouch until the last moment with loving care the work of his hands, he must leave it to the ultimate ordeal by fire. An unfortunate drying may twist into deformity the greatest skill. And yet with all its disadvantages terra cotta is admirable for rapid sketching, and for the expression of vigorous action in men and animals. His bas-relief of the "Horse Fair" is a good example of this. The *Saturday Review*, of June 10th, 1876, says:—

The treatment of reliefs is usually a test of the state of a school of sculpture. Modern art tends to a mongrel—that is, to a confused mixing up of

distinctive styles. Of low relief—taking the Elgin frieze as the standard—one of the purest examples we have seen for many a day is Mr. Caldecott's bas-relief, "A Horse Fair in Brittany." Here a simple and almost rude incident in nature has been brought within the law and symmetry of art.

Another relief in metal—"A Boar Hunt"—is full of life and strength. The horse starting from the push of the boar's tusk, and the stubborn resolution of the brute itself, are given with power and truth.

It is not possible in a short paper to speak of the works done in water-colour and in oil as one would wish, but one example of each may be given. The City Art Gallery contains a small specimen of his oil painting—a "May Day" of the period he loved so well. It is a little gem. A troop of merry-makers are hastening over a village green to the begarlanded maypole in the distance. As usual, there is action and grace, with a delightful scheme of colour to satisfy the eye. The painting is direct—there are no tricks—it is honest work. In one of our late exhibitions there was a water-colour drawing illustrating the fable of "The Hares and the Frogs." The moment chosen for the picture is that of the arrival of the hares at the pond where they had determined to end their timorous existence. The frightened frogs are leaping into the water to save their lives from the trampling danger, while the leading hare has paused on the brink. You can almost see the awakening thought working in his brain which saved him and his from a watery doom. For accuracy of drawing, pure colour, and expression of humour in animals, this picture is worthy of the deepest study. All that he did during the last years was done in ill health and much suffering, but (see the drawings in the *English Illustrated Magazine*) the gaiety of his mind and the fertility of his imagination were unimpaired.

It is too soon to make an exhaustive estimate of Mr.

Caldecott's place in Art. Kindly pardon the short note that is offered. He serves to illustrate the wide difference between the caricaturists of a century and a half ago and those of our own day. In his book on the English School of Painting M. Chesneau points this out, and remarks finely on the identity of the almost brutal representations of the hatred of vice of that day with the love of innocence in this. Our artist joins hands in the humorous with Cruikshank, and in the drawing of women and horses with Leech, to whom he seems a natural successor. Compared with him Du Maurier is artificial, and Keene wanting in grace. He excels them all in range. He moves on altogether different lines from his friend Mr. Walter Crane. While Mr. Caldecott is free and natural, with an unconstrained grace, Mr. Crane is free and graceful within the limits of an academic classicalism. This is of the schools, exercising his gift and restraining his powers subordinate to their teaching—that, lets a vivid imagination play all round his subject, translating into natural speech the tales of our youth and the literature that charms our age.

In dealing with *Puss in Boots* Mr. Crane clothes his figures in semi-Roman costume, with classic boots of the heroic type. The ladies are fancifully dressed in a compound of Greek and Roman, which gracefully drapes their academic forms. He introduces a coach which is modern in shape, with a dash of the ancient chariot about its wheels. He illustrates the story effectively but without insight. His colour is strong, not to say violent. One looks at his drawings with pleasure and closes the book without a sigh.

Take now *A Song of Sixpence*, one of Randolph Caldecott's picture books. Here the story is one of the vaguest among nursery legends. Our artist, with his bland and embracing vision, has penetrated the secret of the tale. It

is a land of afternoon. Clad in modern dress, the characters are wholesomely innocent and void of offence. It seems no miracle that the birds should break into song, and contentedly perch on presumably hot piecrust. The baby king and queen are charming in their young solemnity. We feel sure they are nice children, and that their parents were royal folk who had done justly and loved mercy. This impression is deepened by the troop of old and devoted servants who render a loving service to these young "Imps of Fame." Nor are we startled when the poor maid in the garden is ruthlessly bereft of her nose. We know it is not a permanent injury, for is there not a gallant grenadier rushing bravely to the rescue, who will tenderly replace the "tip-tilted" morsel and fasten it with a loving kiss? As a translator of nursery rhymes and ballads he is unapproached. He is the discoverer of the open secret of these things. He understands what the birds say, and the fairies have kissed his eyes; he has entered into the mind of them, and with loving sympathy he tells us what he knows.

Mr. Caldecott is unique in his power of expressing, with so little apparent effort, so much. A line gives a tract of swelling upland—a few dots hint a field of waving corn—a couple of dogs with their backs to us suggest a roaring fire and a genial sense of comfort—a battered hat on a stone tells the sad fate of the "Frog who would a-wooing go," and the enjoyment of the white duck which gobbled him up. The love of animals, and the expression of almost human emotion which he was able to give to the brute creation, are distinctive notes of the man. His art is always right as far as it goes. His girls are pure, his men strong. There is no sting to rankle in his gentle satire. The nature of the man is in all that he has done. The animals are magnificently drawn. There is beauty as well



as fun at command. We are touched to tears, as in that pathetic little vignette in *Factory Folk*, by Edwin Waugh, and we almost cry with laughing at the discomfiture of Mr. Mortgage and Captain Martingale. Show these drawings to children, and they will get only good. Our boys will learn to love honest English lasses, and our girls to admire true-hearted Englishmen. He has left a good report of his country; and much of the unlovely, cynical, and debased forms of modern life will be qualified to the future historian by the fact that these drawings were loved by us, and the conclusion must be drawn that we are not altogether base, that we are wholesomely sound in the main. The art of this man certainly fulfils the first requisite in all good work. It has beauty; next it has intelligence (we know it has a meaning added to its beauty); and then it has the subordinate but necessary quality of all good art, its meaning is clear.

Sure never pencil steeped in mirth  
So closely kept to grace and beauty.  
The honest charms of mother earth,  
Of manly love, and simple duty,  
Blend in his work with boyish health,  
With amorous maiden's meek cajolery,  
Child witchery, and a wondrous wealth  
Of dainty whim and daring drollery!

—*Punch*, Feb. 27, 1886.

One of Mr. Caldecott's friends writes:—

His ability was *general* and not *special*. It found its natural and most agreeable outlet in art and humour, but everybody who knew him, and those who received his letters, saw that there were perhaps a dozen ways in which he would have distinguished himself had he been drawn to them.

If the art, tender and true as it is, be not of the highest, yet the artist is expressed in his work as perhaps few others have been. Nothing to be regretted—all of the clearest—an open-air, pure life—a clean soul. Wholesome as the England he loved so well. Manly, tolerant, and

patient under suffering. None of the friends he made did he let go. No envy, malice, or uncharitableness spoiled him; no social flattery or fashionable success made him forget those he had known in the early years. In the midst of hard work time was found for the writing of a note, often daintily illustrated, or the sending of an envelope with a kindly message to some acquaintance, which kept the flame of affection alive. His letters were full of the charm of his drawings, and his conversation was equal to both. To have his friendship was to be rich. Following a kindly notice in the *Spectator*, we apply to him Mr. Ruskin's words:—

Happiest at the close of life, when the eye begins to fail, and the right hand to forget its cunning, if he can remember that there was never a touch of the chisel or pencil which it wielded, but has added to the knowledge, and quickened the happiness of mankind!

The Hindoos have a proverb which says, "The words, thoughts, and actions of the just are the same." This was true of Randolph Caldecott. His web was all of a piece, and alas! it is woven out.





## ON GHOST STORIES.

BY REV. W. A. O'CONOR, B.A.

ON the subject of supernatural appearances men are swayed by two contrary tides of feeling. There is a yearning curiosity regarding the marvellous, fomented by nursery tales, and supported by the constantly-supplied fuel of fresh evidence; and there is a latent scepticism countenanced by what is called the spirit of the age, and the progress of science, and roused to irritation by the false claims of spiritual teachers. Those two tendencies find their extreme points of opposition in enthusiastic superstition on the one side, and scientific intolerance on the other. We must endeavour to steer a middle course. Faith and unbelief are equally required in a world of mingled truth and falsehood, but neither has a right to act until reason has selected its appropriate object.

The question is embarrassed at its outset by cross pleas of mistaken identity. There are atmospheric phenomena and abnormal presentments of consciousness, as in dreams and certain forms of disease, into which professional science would resolve all accounts of apparitions. Believers in the supernatural, on the other hand, have at various times impressed those appearances as proofs of their own theory. The settlement of those claims would be the solution of the controversy. A settlement ought to be

obvious on a mere statement of the whole case. If there be such things as ghosts, their visitations must differ essentially from those of the giant of the Hartz Mountains, and from the wild visions of a hypochondriac. An indispensable mark of a spirit returning to earth should be some continuity of human interests, and some retention of earthly habits. If those were wanting we could not conceive why the spirit returned, or how it could make an identification of itself. No one would have taken the portentous figure of the Brocken for a shade, except in the sense in which it was found to be the shadow of the spectator reflected from a cloud. This discovery, so far from disproving the existence of ghosts, only removed from their company a supposed member whose presence among them threw a cloud of doubt over their whole tribe. If we were enquiring whether there were such things as honest men on earth, proving that the members of a certain corporation were not honest men would not help to establish a negative. It would be only putting out of the question formally persons who never by any possibility could have entered into it. There was need of a familiar illustration, because men of science seem to think that they are laying universal ghost-dorm when they attempt to explain the causes of thunder and lightning, and of the colours of the rainbow. So far as they succeed in doing this they only narrow the subject nearer to its proper dimensions, and disencumber it of incongruous matter. Ghosts are a vanishing quantity, only with certain limitations.

The dispute comes into the region where victory must finally declare for one side or the other, when dreams and the phantasms of ill health are brought into competition with ghosts. Medical writers, who unanimously resent the bare notion of the dead returning to life as a reflection on the thoroughness of their own work, ascribe all visions and

apparitions to imagination and forms of disease verging on incipient insanity. The method by which I shall endeavour to arrive at a dispassionate conclusion will be to bring some descriptions of the effects of imagination and disease, and also some relations of appearances supposed by some to be supernatural, and compare them with each other. We can easily form an opinion whether they are produced by the same cause, and should be placed in the same category. If we determine that they were not produced by the same cause, this will not decide whether the cases supposed to be supernatural are really so, because they may still be referred to other natural causes, but it will simplify the whole subject, and enable us to substitute the philosophy of a suspended judgment for the complacency of a prejudiced conclusion. The narratives I shall quote for the purpose of instituting our comparison will all be taken from the work of Dr. Ferriar, whose *Theory of Apparitions* was written to prove that the belief in ghosts is explained away by the law that the effect of an impression on the eye may continue after the impression itself has ceased, working through imagination or disease.

"A gentleman, while travelling alone in a remote part of Scotland, was compelled to seek shelter at a small lonely hut. When he was conducted to his bedroom the landlady observed with mysterious reluctance that he would find the window very insecure. On examination, part of the wall appeared to have been broken down to enlarge the opening. After some inquiry, he was told that a pedlar, who had lodged in the room a short time before, had committed suicide, and was found hanging behind the door in the morning. According to the superstition of the country, it was deemed improper to remove the body through the door of the house, and to convey it through the window was impossible, without removing part of the

wall. Some hints were dropped that the room had been subsequently haunted by the poor man's spirit. The gentleman laid his arms, properly prepared against intrusion of any kind, by the bed-side, and retired to rest, not without some degree of apprehension. He was visited in a dream by a frightful apparition, and awaking in agony, found himself sitting up in bed, with a pistol grasped in his right hand. On casting a fearful glance round the room, he discovered, by the moonlight, a corpse, dressed in a shroud, reared erect against the wall, close by the window. With much difficulty he summoned up resolution to approach the dismal object, the features of which, and the minutest parts of its funeral apparel, he perceived distinctly. He passed one hand over it; felt nothing, and staggered back to bed. After a long interval, and much reasoning with himself, he renewed his investigation, and at length discovered that the object of his terror was produced by the moonbeams forming a long bright image through the broken window, on which his fancy, impressed by his dream, had pictured, with mischievous accuracy, the lineaments of a body prepared for interment. Powerful associations of terror, in this instance, had excited the recollected images with uncommon force and effect." "When the brain is partially irritated," continues the same writer, "the patient fancies that he sees spiders crawling over his bedclothes, or person; or beholds them covering the roof and walls of his room. If the disease increases, he imagines that persons who are dead, or absent, flit round his bed; that animals crowd into his apartment, and that all these apparitions speak to him. . . . I had occasion to see a young married woman whose first indication of illness was a spectral delusion. She told me that her apartment appeared suddenly to be filled with devils, and that her terror compelled her to quit the house. When she was

brought back, she saw the whole staircase occupied by diabolical forms. After this first impression wore off she heard a voice tempting her to self-destruction, and prohibiting her from all exercises of piety. Her account of the demons was that they were small, very much deformed, and had horns and claws, like the imps of our terrific modern romances." The narrative of Nicolai, the Berlin author and bookseller, is constantly referred to by medical writers. I will quote some sentences from Ferriar's description: "I saw, in a state of mind completely sound, and after the first terror was over, with perfect calmness, for nearly two months, almost constantly and involuntarily, a vast number of human and other forms, and even heard their voices, though all this was merely the consequence of a diseased state of the nerves, and an irregular circulation of the blood. . . . During the ten latter months of the year 1790 I had experienced several melancholy incidents which deeply affected me, particularly in September, from which time I suffered an almost uninterrupted series of misfortunes that afflicted me with the most poignant grief. I was accustomed to be bled twice a year [we may here remind ourselves that at that time doctors laid and made ghosts by one and the same operation of bleeding] and this had been done on the 9th of July, but was omitted to be repeated at the end of the year 1790. . . . I had, in January and February of the year 1791, the additional misfortune to experience several extremely unpleasant circumstances, which were followed on the 24th of February by a most violent altercation . . . on a sudden I perceived, about the distance of ten steps, a form like that of a deceased person. . . . In the afternoon the form re-appeared. . . . About ten o'clock there appeared also several walking figures, which had no connection with the first. . . . After the first day

the form of the deceased person no more appeared, but in its place, there appeared many other phantasms, sometimes representing acquaintances, but mostly strangers, those whom I knew were composed of living and deceased persons, but the number of the latter was comparatively small. . . . I could distinguish between phantasms and real objects. . . . I knew exactly when it only appeared to me the door was opening and a phantasm entering the room, and when it actually opened, and a real person entered. . . . I generally saw human forms of both sexes, but they usually appeared not to take the smallest notice of each other . . . they increased in number about four weeks. . . . I also began to hear them speak . . . sometimes among themselves, but more frequently to me. . . . At last it was agreed that leeches should be again applied . . . which was actually done. . . . No person was with me besides the surgeon; but during the operation my chamber was crowded with human phantasms of all descriptions. . . . About half an hour after four o'clock, when my digestion commenced, they began to move more slowly. Soon after their colour began to fade, and at seven o'clock they were entirely white. . . . About eight o'clock the room was entirely cleared of my fantastic visitors." It is very likely on the same principle that if the bleeding had continued long enough, not only shadows, but substances, including the surgeon himself, would have disappeared from the poor patient.

The law to which those phantasms are ascribed by Dr. Ferriar is that "impressions produced on some of the external senses, especially on the eye, are more durable than the application of the impressing cause" (p. 15). Dr. Abercombie tells us that Sir Isaac Newton acquired the power of recalling the spectra of the sun when he went



into the dark and directed his mind intensely, "as when a man looks earnestly to see a thing which is difficult to be seen." (*Intell. Fac.*, p. 51.) Dr. Ferriar says that when young he used to amuse himself by recalling images in this way. If he saw a romantic ruin or a review of troops, when evening came on if he went into a dark room the whole scene was brilliantly brought before his eyes (p. 16). Cardan used to amuse himself in the same manner. Before he left his bed in the morning he saw a succession of figures, composed of brazen rings, like links of mail, moving in a circular direction upwards, from right to left, till they disappeared. Castles, houses, animals, trees; trumpeters, appearing to blow their trumpets, though no sound was heard; soldiery and landscapes; all passed before him, in circular compartments (p. 56).

Those accounts, given by Dr. Ferriar in his "Theory of Apparitions," are followed in the same work by some instances of appearances commonly supposed to be supernatural. It is concluded from their common resemblance to each other that they all had a common cause. Our part now is to observe whether they do resemble each other.

"Ben Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden that about the time the plague was in London, he being in the country, at Mr. Robert Cotton's house, with old Cambden, he saw in a vision his eldest son, then a young child and at London, appear unto him with the mark of a bloody cross on his forehead, as if it had been cut with a sword, at which amazed he prayed unto God, and in the morning he came unto Mr. Cambden's chamber to tell him, who persuaded him it was but an apprehension at which he should not be dejected. In the meantime there came letters from his wife of the death of that boy in the plague."

"Two days after Dr. Donne had arrived in Paris he was

left alone in a room, where he had been dining with Sir Robert Drury and a few companions. Sir Robert returned about an hour afterwards. He found his friend in a state of ecstasy, and so altered in countenance that he could not look upon him without amazement. The doctor was not able for some time to answer the question, What had befallen him? but after a long and perplexed pause, at last said, 'I have seen a dreadful vision since I saw you; I have seen my dear wife pass twice by me through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms. This I have seen since I saw you.' To which Sir Robert answered—'Sure, sir, you have slept since I went out; and this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for you are now awake.' Donne replied—'I cannot be more sure that I now live than that I have not slept since I saw you; and am as sure that at her second appearing she stopped, looked me in the face, and vanished.'" The poet's biographer (Izaak Walton) then adds that a servant was despatched to Drury House to know if Mrs. Donne was living, who brought back word that he found this lady very sad and sick in bed, and that after a long and dangerous labour—which took place on the same day, and about the same hour that the spectral impression occurred—she had been delivered of a dead child. (Quoted from Dr. Hibbert's fuller account.)

Baronius relates that "two friends, Ficinus and Michael Mercato, after a long discourse on the nature of the soul, had agreed that whoever of the two should die first, should, if possible, appear to his surviving friend, and inform him of his condition in the other world. A short time afterwards it happened that while Michael Mercato was studying philosophy, early in the morning, he suddenly heard the noise of a horse galloping in the street,

which stopped at his door, and the voice of his friend Ficinus was heard, exclaiming, 'O Michael! O Michael! those things are true.' Astonished at this address, Mercato rose and looked out of the window, where he saw the back of his friend drest in white, galloping off on a white horse. He called after him, and followed him with his eyes, till the appearance vanished. Upon enquiry, he learned that Ficinus had died at Florence, at the very time when this vision was presented to Mercato, at a considerable distance." "Many attempts have been made"—says Dr. Ferriar, from whose *Theory of Apparitions*, London and Warrington, 1813, I make this quotation—"to discredit this story, but I think the evidence has never been shaken." Baronius adds, that after this occurrence, Mercato neglected all profane studies and addicted himself entirely to divinity. (Ferriar, p. 102.)

Mr. Bezuel, when a schoolboy of 15, in 1695, contracted an intimacy with a younger boy, named Desfontaines. They agreed to form a compact that in case of death the spirit of the deceased should revisit the survivor, and they signed it respectively with their blood. Soon after they were separated, and Desfontaines went to Caen. In July, 1697, Bezuel had a fainting fit, after which he passed a bad night. The next day he had another attack, during which he saw a naked man half length, but did not know him. He had another fit, in which he saw Desfontaines, who said, "I am dead. I was drowned yesterday about this hour." The accidental death of the young man was ascertained very quickly. The time of the accident agreed with that of the first fainting fit (Ferriar, p. 118).

Those four cases are selected by Dr. Ferriar as fittest to be grouped with the spectral illusions of disease and imagination which he has given, and as coming most naturally under the same law. The most casual inspection will show

that they have not a single feature in common. To say that the eye or ear retains impressions is only another form of saying that we remember things. Whenever we speak we employ words which we have heard; but it does not follow from this that a Queen's speech and the ravings of a lunatic are to be classed together. In the cases of hallucination, voluntary or involuntary, there was no order, no meaning, no message, no possibility of being tested by a coincidental fulfilment, and, in each case, the aberrations of the senses were proved to be false at the moment, or subsequently, by the judgment of the mind. The other cases all exhibit the marks of design that characterise ordinary human conduct. There is no disease, no doubt, and the message is verified by the event. The phantoms of disease are multitudinous; the apparitions of health are solitary. There is some reason for thinking that the spiders and coats of mail mentioned were owing to the condition of the vitreous humour of the eye. Most persons have noticed filaments and sometimes dark spots projected on any white object on which they chance to look, particularly in the morning. Not being in the front of the ball of the eye they cannot be seen directly, and when the attempt is made to observe them they seem to move, their motion, in reality, being the motion of the eye. They are caused by some irregularity of digestion, and must, when the mind is diseased, or fancy rules, be a fertile source of illusion.

There are two additional instances given by Dr. Hibbert in his *Philosophy of Apparitions* which is an elaborate amplification of Dr. Ferriar's work. Lord Balcarras was in confinement in the castle of Edinburgh on suspicion of Jacobitism. One morning, while he lay in bed, the curtains were drawn aside by his friend Viscount Dundee, who looked upon him steadfastly, leaned for some time upon the mantelpiece, and then walked out of the room.

Lord Balcarras, not aware that he was gazing on a spectre, called to Dundee to come back, and speak to him; but the figure was gone. Shortly afterwards the news came that he had fallen about the same hour at Killieranky (p. 168). Dr. Hibbert's remarks on this story are that "the most interesting particulars are suppressed." What he means by this is that nothing is said about the state of Lord Balcarras' health at the time. We generally take for granted that when nothing is said about the state of a person's health, he is in good health. But it being assumed by medical writers that all apparitions are caused by disease, nothing is interesting to them except something that will substantiate their theory. The second narrative will bring this prejudgment again under notice. The event occurred in 1662, and the account was drawn up by the Bishop of Gloucester from the recital of the father of the person concerned. "Sir Charles Lee, by his first lady, had only one daughter, of which she died in childbirth, and, when she was dead, her sister, the Lady Everard, desired to have the education of the child, and she was by her very well educated, till she was marriageable, and a match was concluded for her with Sir William Perkins, but was then prevented in an extraordinary manner. Upon a Thursday night, she, thinking she saw a light in her chamber after she was in bed, knocked for her maid, who presently came to her, and she asked 'Why she left a candle burning in her chamber?' The maid said she 'left none, and there was none but what she brought with her at that time.' Then she said it was the fire, but that, her maid told her, was quite out: and said she believed it was only a dream—whereupon she said it might be so, and composed herself again to sleep. But about two of the clock she was awakened again, and saw the apparition of a little woman

between her curtain and her pillow, who told her she was her mother, that she was happy, and that by twelve of the clock that day she should be with her. Whereupon she again knocked for her maid, called for her clothes, and when she was dressed, went into her closet, and came not out again till nine, and then brought out with her a letter sealed to her father; brought it to her aunt, the Lady Everard, told her what had happened, and declared, that as soon as she was dead it might be sent to him. The lady thought she was suddenly fallen mad, and therefore sent presently away to Chelmsford for a physician and surgeon: but the physician could discern no indication of what the lady imagined, or of any indisposition of her body; notwithstanding the lady would needs have her let blood, which was done accordingly. And when the young woman had patiently let them do what they would with her, she desired that the chaplain might be called to read prayers; and when prayers were ended, she took her guitar and psalm-book, and sat down upon a chair without arms, and played and sung so melodiously and admirably that her musick-master, who was then there, admired at it. And near the stroke of twelve, she rose and sate herself down in a great chair with arms, and presently, fetching a strong breathing or two, immediately expired, and was so suddenly cold, as was much wondered at by the physician and surgeon" (p. 169). Dr. Hibbert's comment on this narrative is more surprising than any ghost story. "When strictly examined, the manner in which a leading circumstance in the case is reported, affects but too much the supernatural air imparted to others of its incidents. For whatever might have been averred by a physician of the *olden time*, with regard to the young lady's sound state of health during the period she saw her mother's ghost, it may be asked, if any practitioner at the present

day would have been proud of such an opinion, especially when death followed so promptly after the spectral impression?" This means that the modern physician's expression of opinion would be guided, not by the truth of the case, but by its bearing on collateral interests and opinions. It will be remembered that the young lady, though said to be in good health, was nevertheless bled, and still adhered to her persuasion.

When we are searching for truth we must not only seek to know facts, but we must also know and allow for the influences that cloud and pervert them. The relations of credulous and excited ghostseers are to be suspected, but the incredulity that angrily dispenses with, or rashly exhibits its ignorance of, the established modes of reasoning must be resisted even though it usurp the throne of science.

The visions of sickness or insanity or excited feeling have an origin peculiar to them. The mind is the conscious sum of the senses. In ordinary rational life mind and senses generally act together. But not always. We cannot form thoughts mentally without employing words. Sometimes when we forget ourselves we think aloud—that is, we soliloquise. Now this speaking in soliloquy is a momentary lapse of reason or consciousness. It is mental levity or frivolity. For tragedies and romances are quite in error when they resort to soliloquy to bring the profound secrets of the soul into light. It is always our lightest thoughts that we utter in soliloquy. This is a mark of eccentricity when it becomes a habit, of insanity when it cannot be checked. Something like this occurs in phantasms. We never think of a person without having at the time a more or less distinct image of him or her before the mind. It is quite common to hear it said, "I can see him before me at this moment," of an absent person. If one whom we have never seen is

often spoken of, we form an imaginary picture of him in our minds. We have all heard or said the words, "He is quite different from what I expected," when some one of whom much has been heard is seen for the first time. The only case I can remember of the prefigured image being correct is that of the lover whose heart was breaking for love of Alice Grey, and who pronounced that she was "all his fancy painted her." Now those inward images which we carry about with us, and perhaps we have one for everyone whom we have ever seen and of whom we have ever heard, might be seen by us if reason or consciousness were off its guard. They might take sensuous shape within us, and if we were unconscious at the time we should suppose we saw them externally. This is what happens in dreaming. Conscious mind or reason is dormant, and sensuous mind or sense acts without restraint. We may notice the approach of sleep. Sensible objects begin to appear; reason reels on her seat, and we become unconscious. Sleep may be produced by fixing the eye as it were on some object that imagination presents to it. Thinking is thus arrested, and sleep ensues. Sometimes when dreaming we know we are dreaming. The reason is partially awake, and is aware of the gambols of the senses. The visions of Nicolai, the Berlin bookseller, were waking dreams. His reason was partially obscured or weakened, and while strong enough to see the figments of sense it was too weak to suppress them. This was partial insanity. His state resembled that of a dreamer who knows that he is dreaming, but must let his dream run its course. The mind, as it is swayed or characterised by sense or reason, may be called the sensuous mind or the rational mind. When we hear a sound in sleep, the ear, or the sensuous mind, gives it a meaning, and conjures up on the instant a whole set of circumstances to account for it. A



friend of mine slept once in a farmer's house. He dreamed that he saw a line of infantry drawn up on a parade ground. They went through various evolutions, and at last, at the word of command, presented their guns and discharged a volley. The loud report awoke my friend, and as he became conscious the sound merged into the gobble of a turkey cock that was perched near his bed. The mental ear translated an external sound which it could not account for because it was out of its sphere, into another form of sound for which it could frame a cause in its own world of fancy. When the sleeper awakes he is for a while perplexed between the two sounds. In the same way the mental eye of the traveller in Scotland brought the phantom of its terror out of the region of sleep and confused it with a moonbeam. Dr. Abercrombie relates how a gentleman had a dream, in which the chief figure was an immense baboon. He awoke in a fright, and for half a minute saw the baboon at the end of the room making grimaces at him. This kind of delusion may under certain conditions occur when we are awake. "When we are broad awake," Coleridge says, "if we are in anxious expectation, how often will not the most confused sounds of Nature be heard by us as articulate sounds? For instance, the babbling of a brook will appear for a moment the voice of a friend for whom we are waiting, calling out our own name." Sir W. Scott, in his work on *Demonology and Witchcraft*, relates how a literary friend of a great poet, lately deceased, was in the darkening twilight of an autumn evening reading his life. The sitting-room opened into an entrance hall rather fantastically fitted up with articles of armour, skins of wild animals, and the like. The gentleman laid down his book, and passing into this hall, through which the moon was beginning to shine, saw right before him, in a standing posture, the exact representation of his departed

friend, whose recollection had been strongly brought to his imagination. He approached the figure, and as he drew near it resolved itself into a screen, occupied by great-coats, shawls, plaids, and such other articles as are found in a country entrance hall. If the senses so predominated as to produce those effects habitually it would be insanity. So that when we say a man is out of his senses, the real fact is that he is in them. Both ear and eye have the power of reproducing sounds and sights which they have once perceived. When I first removed to the house which I now occupy in Upper Brook Street, the servants reported next morning that they had been awakened in the middle of the night by a very loud knock at the hall door, and that as they lay listening they heard some one moving through their room. They added that the house was said to be haunted. Soon after I was startled from sleep one night by a very sharp double knock, such as might be given by the infuriated ghost of a very impatient postman. This happened several times at intervals until at last, as I took no special notice, the mysterious knocker-up, supposing that I slept too soundly at his previous visits, one morning, while I lay in bed and my wife was dressing, hammered loudly in his usual fashion, but in broad daylight, on the other side of the wall at the head of my bed. There was no doubt now about the origin of the sound. But the fact which is of moment in our present inquiry is this—that for a considerable time I heard occasionally in sleep this same double knock repeated by what I felt to be the spontaneous action of the ear. It might have been that there was some external sound which the ear translated into the familiar double knock. Once when I was sleeping in Chester I heard the same sound as if it came from a great distance. This was a singular circumstance. The ear when in Manchester, knowing

that the sound originated there, gave it a proportionate loudness, but when it was in Chester, deciding that the noise must still begin in Manchester, taking for granted I suppose that such fools could not be found in any other part of England, managed its vibrations so as to seem caused by a remote impact. A lady at one time confided to me in great distress, that she was awakened every night by a sound resembling that which would be produced by striking the poker violently and rapidly across the three bars of a grate. She had heard the real sound no doubt when in a nervous state, and the ear of its own accord reproduced it. The passions, which are of sensuous origin, but affect the mind, may be similarly excited by artificial means, until the mind sees objects of provocation where none need exist. Covert insults and pretended indirect imputations may be multiplied so that their intended victim, if he be not quite master of the situation, will become sensitive to words which to others are meaningless, and by noticing which he will lay himself open to the charge of insanity. Morbid suspicion may be created in a similar manner. If a man conceives that he is watched or followed by others, he can convert every one who comes near him into a spy. There is no mental manifestation to which medical writers attach so much importance as to this kind of suspiciousness in their catalogue of insane symptoms, and there is no doubt but that if the patient is overpowered by it he becomes insane. But it should be noticed that there is none that is so easily produced by artificial stimulants. If you are sitting in a room, and a person thrusts in his head at the door, looks at you, and quickly withdraws it, so as to make it appear that he is looking at you, your curiosity is stirred. If the thing be repeated again and again you desire to know what it means. Of course if your suspicion takes the healthy form of perceiving

trickery you are safe. But suspicion may take an unhealthy direction. If the action continues, and follows you into public places, such as hotels, where servants and others are in the habit of looking into rooms, you are in danger of believing that every one who looks into the room where you are is watching you, and if you complain, strangers will certainly conclude that your brain is affected. The delusions and hallucinations of sickness or insanity are traceable to these causes. They have features that determine them broadly from the apparitions or presentments that are said to occur to sane and healthy subjects. They originate within the mind. They are, in fact, confined to persons of weak understanding, or to circumstances that overthrow the reason, such as disease, trouble, persecution, the epidemic of witchcraft, delirium tremens, or religious mania. They are idle, incoherent, confused, purposeless. They contain no significance, convey no premonition. The standing argument against the stories of wraiths is that the coincidence is accidental. Out of the innumerable dreams and visions that occur, it is said, some must hit the mark. I shall have to meet this argument again before I conclude, but will notice one answer to it here. No accounts of the above apparitions could hit the mark but those that did hit it. Out of all the delusions that have been described, is there one that could coincide with any of the results in the cases of verified warning which have been given? We all have been dreaming all our lives—how many dreams have we had that were capable of an accidental fulfilment? Our dreams are merely fulfilments of things we have seen, but are incapable—save in one apparent case, which will be mentioned—of being fulfilled by events.

I have dwelt so long on apparitions appearing at the moment of death that it will be most convenient to confine

myself to this class of visions for the rest of the paper, reserving some other aspects of the subject for a future communication. The instances hitherto given are taken from the pages of adversaries, who raise no objection to them on the ground of want of authentication. The further cases I shall quote will relate to persons and be taken from sources of unquestionable reliability. I have been until now arguing for the wide dissimilarity between the visions of disease and those ascribed to supernatural causes; in the remainder of the paper my chief purpose will be to show that the doctrine of chances offers no solution of the difficulty.

"In September, 1847, I was playing at a cricket match. A ball was driven in my direction, which I ought to have caught, but missed it, and it rolled towards a low hedge. I and another lad ran after it. When I got near the hedge I saw the apparition of my brother-in-law, who was much endeared to me, over the hedge, dressed in a shooting suit with a gun on his arm. He smiled and waved his hand at me. I called the attention of the other boy to it; but he did not see it. When I looked again the figure had vanished. I, feeling very sad at the time, went up to my uncle and told him of what I had seen. He took out his watch and noted the time, just ten minutes to one o'clock. Two days after I received a letter from my father informing me of the death of my brother-in-law, which took place at ten minutes to one o'clock. His death was singular, for on that morning he said he was much better and thought he should be able to shoot again. Taking up his gun, he turned round to my father, asking him if he had sent for me, as he particularly wished to see me. My father replied the distance was too far and the expense too great to send for me, it being over 100 miles. At this he put himself into a passion,

and said he would see me in spite of them all, for he did not care for expense or distance. Suddenly a blood-vessel on the lungs burst, and he died at once. He was at the time dressed in a shooting suit and had a gun on his arm. I knew he was ill, but a letter from my father previous to the time I saw him told me he was improving, and that he might get through the winter." This narrative is signed Rowland Bowstead, M.D., and appears in the July Part, 1884, of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. I quote it for the purpose of showing that, supposing it to be a true account of a real event, it is utterly out of the question to account for it by describing it as a coincidence. The doctrine of chances has no place here. It applies to numbers and not to morals. There may be numerical coincidences which can be made matters of calculation, or dead facts stripped of all circumstances may be found in some conceivable proportion to agree with each other, but the moment you plunge the facts in life, universal dissimilarity is the law of Nature. No two living beings are exactly alike. No two blades of grass since creation are exactly alike. I once tested a blind boy's sense of touch by giving him coffee beans which I could only distinguish by keeping both in my sight. He could distinguish them at once by feeling them. No one coffee bean would coincide with another. In human affairs correspondence can always be distinguished from coincidence. A number of apparitions appear it is said without any corresponding result, but if they continue to appear, a corresponding result must at last occur according to the doctrine of chances. If an abstract apparition and an abstract death were in question this might be true, but the circumstantial agreement of an apparition and a death could not possibly occur save by a natural and necessary relation to each other. Let us imagine that men were sup-

posed to cast no shadows in the sunshine, and that shadows were moving independently on the earth. A question would arise whether there was any connection between the shadows and the men. Some would point to coincidences in proof that there was such a connection. Others would say that those coincidences were accidental, and only occurred according to the law of chances. Now, a shadow and a man might come together by chance, and the two might agree in every particular of a complex figure or dress, and this too might happen by chance. But, when the man moved, is it possible that the shadow should also move and imitate every direction taken and gesture made for a given time, and that this should happen by chance? Yet this supposition is only a remote resemblance to what must take place when not merely outline answers to outline, and movement to movement, but when mind answers to mind. If the young man in the above account had a presentiment, or saw an insensible emblem of death, and that an actual death was found to correspond, the correspondence might be called fortuitous; but when the dress, the occupation, and the interchange of feelings are taken into account, we unhesitatingly conclude that one event could not have been anything but a mental photograph of the other.

I will quote one more account from the same source as the last. It was received from Sir Edmund Hornby, late Chief Judge of the Supreme Consular Court of China and Japan. He first narrates how it was his habit at Shanghai to allow reporters to come to his house in the evening to get his written judgments for the next day's paper. "They generally availed themselves of the opportunity, especially one reporter, who was also the editor of an evening paper. He was a peculiar man, reticent about himself, and, I imagine, had a history. . . . One day in 1875 or 1876,

I went to my study an hour or two after dinner, and wrote out my judgment. It was then about half-past eleven. I rang for the butler, gave him an envelope, and told him to give it to the reporter who should call for it. I was in bed before twelve. . . . I had gone to sleep, when I was awakened by hearing a tap at the study door, but, thinking it might be the butler, . . . I turned over with the view of getting to sleep again. Before I did so, I heard a tap at my bedroom door. Still thinking it might be the butler, I said 'Come in.' The door opened, and, to my surprise, in walked Mr. —. I sat up and said, 'You have mistaken the door; but the butler has the judgment, so go and get it.' Instead of leaving the room he came to the foot edge of the bed. I said, 'Mr. —, you forget yourself. Have the goodness to walk out directly. This is rather an abuse of my favour.' He looked deadly pale, but was dressed in his usual dress, and was certainly quite sober, and said, 'I know I am guilty of an unwarrantable intrusion, but, finding that you were not in your study, I ventured to come here.' I was losing my temper, but something in the man's manner disinclined me to jump out of bed to eject him by force. So I said simply, 'This is too bad, really; pray leave the room at once.' Instead of doing so, he put one hand on the foot-rail and gently, and as if in pain, sat down on the foot of the bed. I glanced at the clock and saw that it was about twenty minutes past one. I said, 'The butler has the judgment since half-past eleven; go and get it.' He said, 'Pray forgive me; if you knew all the circumstances, you would. Time presses. Pray give me a précis of your judgment, and I will take a note in my book of it,' drawing his reporter's book out of his breast pocket. I said, 'I will do nothing of the kind. Go downstairs, find the butler, and don't disturb me—you will wake



my wife; otherwise I shall have to put you out.' He slightly moved his hand. I said, 'Who let you in?' He answered, 'No one.' 'Confound it,' I said, 'what—do you mean? Are you drunk?' He replied quietly, 'No, and never shall be again, but I pray your lordship to give me your decision, for my time is short.' I said, 'You don't seem to care about *my* time, and this is the last time I will ever allow a reporter in my house.' He stopped me short, saying, 'This is the *last* time I shall ever see you anywhere.' Well, fearful that this commotion might arouse and frighten my wife, I shortly gave him the gist of my judgment in as few words as I could. He seemed to be taking it down in shorthand; it might have taken two or three minutes. When I finished, he rose, thanked me for excusing his intrusion, and for the consideration I had always shown him and his colleagues, opened the door, and went away. I looked at the clock; it was on the stroke of half-past one. . . . I went to the court a little before ten. The usher came into my room to robe me, when he said, 'A sad thing has happened last night, sir. Poor — was found dead in his room. . . . He went up to his room as usual at ten, to work at his papers. His wife went up about eleven to ask him when he would be ready for bed. He said, 'I have only the judge's judgment to get ready, and then I have finished.' As he did not come, she went up again, about a quarter to one, to his room, and peeped in, and thought she saw him writing, but she did not disturb him. At half-past one she again went to him, and spoke to him at the door. As he did not answer, she thought he had fallen asleep, so she went up to rouse him. To her horror, he was dead. On the floor was his note book, which I have brought away. She sent for the doctor, who arrived a little after two, and said he had been dead, he concluded, about an hour.'

I looked at the note book. There was the usual heading—  
'In the Supreme Court, before the Chief Judge, —v.—  
The Chief Judge, this morning, gave judgment in this  
case to the following effect,' and then followed a few  
lines of undecipherable shorthand." It may be said, in  
conclusion, that the door of the judge's house had been  
locked and was found so in the morning, and that the  
distance from it to the reporter's house was a mile and a  
quarter. This occurrence may be denied or explained, but  
it cannot be accounted for by the doctrine of chances.  
Looking at it on its own merits we pronounce it impossible,  
and prefer the supposition that the man eluded the notice  
of his wife, and by some means forced himself into the  
judge's bedroom. This is the solution that common sense  
suggests, and would continue to suggest, though it were  
established beyond question that he never possibly left his  
own house, had no possible means of getting to the judge's  
house, and if he did could not possibly find admission. I  
want to convey that there is a prepossession impervious to  
evidence on this subject. But when we say the story is  
impossible, what do we mean? I think we really mean  
that it is not in the nature of things, that it is contrary to  
the laws of the universe. But what do we know of the  
nature of things or of the laws of the universe except from  
actual occurrences? When we say, therefore, that the  
thing is impossible, all that we can mean is that nothing  
like it ever happened. But we have just read the case of  
the young man playing cricket who saw his brother-in-  
law. If that be denied on the ground that nothing  
like *it* ever happened, we come back to the story of  
the judge and the reporter. Then it may be said that  
nothing like those two cases ever happened; and this  
may be said of a hundred or a thousand cases. To  
say that an account of an apparition intelligible on

psychical grounds is incredible because nothing like it has occurred before, is ignoring antecedent possibility and actual experience. The incredibility of apparitions means their impossibility, and their impossibility means their non-existence. Does our knowledge enable us to affirm their non-existence? Does the petty interest we have in their non-existence justify our willingness to assert it? There is a curious resemblance between this account of the reporter and an incident that we meet with in the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*. The new house at Abbotsford was in progress, and Scott was living in an older part close adjoining. On April 30th, 1818, he wrote to Daniel Terry, "The exposed state of my house has led to a mysterious disturbance. The night before last we were awakened by a violent noise, like drawing heavy boards along the new part of the house. I fancied something had fallen, and thought no more about it. This was about two in the morning. Last night at the same witching hour the very same noise occurred. Mrs. S., as you know, is very timbersome. So I got up, took Beadie's broadsword under my arm—'Bolt upright and ready to fight.' But nothing was out of order, neither can I discover what occasioned the disturbance." Mr. Lockhart adds, "On the morning that Mr. Terry received the foregoing letter in London, Mr. William Erskine was breakfasting with him, and the chief subject of their conversation was the sudden death of George Bullock, which had occurred on the same night, and, as nearly as they could ascertain, at the very hour when Scott was roused from his sleep by the mysterious disturbance here described. This coincidence, when Scott received Erskine's minute detail of what happened in Tenterden Street (that is, the death of Bullock, who had the charge of furnishing the new rooms at Abbotsford), made a much stronger

impression on his mind than might be gathered from the tone of an ensuing communication." Scott, a week or two afterwards, wrote thus to Terry:—"Were you not struck with the fantastical coincidence of our nocturnal disturbance at Abbotsford, with the melancholy event that followed? I protest to God the noise resembled half-a-dozen men hard at work pulling up boards and furniture; and nothing can be more certain than that there was nobody on the premises at the time. With a few additional touches, the story would figure in Glanville or Aubrey's collection." Scott's common sense fought against his secret conviction. But it should be remembered that common sense is itself only the ghost of received opinion. What was received opinion long ago, is, if it exist at all, individual folly now; and what was individual folly long ago is received opinion to-day. Common sense is only acquiescence in received opinion. Though it is invaluable as a prudent rule of life in any given place or age, it cannot, for a single instant, compete with individual sense in the discovery of truth: When witchcraft was universally believed in it was safe common sense to believe in it. When men believed that the sun moved round the earth, common sense admonished Galileo that it was safest to go with the crowd. Common sense is against ghosts for the present, but then its judgment is valid only as to the prudence of avowing belief in them, and not at all as to the goodness or badness of the foundation of the belief. Common sense and received opinion have got so confused that neither can be relied on in such a matter as this. We see a similar struggle in the mind of Lord Brougham on the same subject. "Tired with the cold of yesterday," he writes, "I was glad to take advantage of a hot bath before I turned in. And here a most remarkable thing happened to me—so remarkable that I must tell the story from the

beginning. After I left the High School, I went with G——, my most intimate friend, to attend the classes in the University. There was no divinity class, but we frequently in our walks discussed and speculated upon many grave subjects—among others, on the immortality of the soul, and on a future state. This question, and the possibility, I will not say of ghosts walking, but of the dead appearing to the living, were subjects of much speculation; and we actually committed the folly of drawing up an agreement, *written with our blood*, to the effect that, whichever of us died the first should appear to the other, and thus solve any doubts we had entertained of the ‘life after death.’ After we had finished our classes at the college, G—— went to India, having got on appointment there in the Civil Service. He seldom wrote to me, and after the lapse of a few years I had almost forgotten him. Moreover, his family having little connection with Edinburgh, I seldom saw or heard anything of them, or of him through them, so that all the schoolboy intimacy had died out, and I had nearly forgotten his existence. I had taken, as I have said, a warm bath; and while lying in it, and enjoying the comfort of the heat, after the late freezing I had undergone, I turned my head round, looking towards the chair on which I had deposited my clothes, as I was about to get up out of the bath. On the chair sat G—— looking calmly at me. How I got out of the bath I know not; but on recovering my senses I found myself sprawling on the floor. The apparition, or whatever it was, that had taken the likeness of G——, had disappeared. This vision produced such a shock that I had no inclination to talk about it, or to speak about it even to Stuart [one of his fellow-travellers in Sweden, where the event occurred]; but the impression it made upon me was too vivid to be

easily forgotten, and so strongly was I affected by it, that I have here written down the whole history, with the date, 19 December, and all the particulars, as they are fresh before me. No doubt I had fallen asleep; and that the appearance presented so distinctly to my eyes was a dream, I cannot for a moment doubt. Yet for years I had had no communication with G—, nor had there been anything to recall him to my recollection. Nothing had taken place during our Swedish travels either connected with G— or with India, or with anything relating to him, or to any member of his family. I recollected quickly enough our old discussion, and the bargain we had made. I could not discharge from my mind the impression that G— must have died, and that his appearance to me was to be received by me as proof of a future state; yet all the while I felt convinced that the whole was a dream: and so painfully vivid, and so unfading was the impression, that I could not bring myself to talk of it, or to make the slightest allusion to it. I finished dressing; and as we had agreed to make an early start, I was ready by six o'clock, the hour of our early breakfast." This passage was written in 1799. It is followed by a note written October 16, 1862. "I have just been copying out from my journal the account of this strange dream. *Certissima mortis imago!* And now to finish the story, begun above sixty years since. Soon after my return to Edinburgh, there arrived a letter from India, announcing G—'s death! and stating that he had died on the 19th of December!! Singular coincidence! Yet when one reflects on the vast number of dreams which night after night pass through our brain, the number of coincidences between the vision and the event are perhaps fewer and less remarkable than a fair calculation of chances would warrant us to expect. Nor is it surprising, considering the

variety of our thoughts in sleep, and that they bear some analogy to the affairs of life, that a dream should sometimes coincide with a contemporaneous or even a future event. This is not much more wonderful than that a person, whom we had no reason to expect, should appear to us at the very moment we had been thinking or speaking of him. So common is this, that it has for ages grown into the proverb, 'Speak of the devil.' *Life of Lord Brougham*, Vol. I., 201. In this passage we see the force of evidence and the resistance of reason contending in Lord Brougham's mind. Let us impartially view the arguments with which reason claims the victory. "It was a dream." But if his account be correct, it could not possibly be a dream. "It was a coincidence." If G——'s likeness had appeared to any other of the many persons who must have known him, at the time of his death, it might be a coincidence or it might not, but when it appeared to the only person in the world to whom it had promised to come, the word coincidence is clearly insufficient. When we meet a friend by appointment we do not call it a coincidence. "The appearance of a person of whom we have been thinking or speaking has become a proverb." But Lord Brougham expressly tells us that he had not been speaking or thinking of his friend, but that, on the contrary, he had wholly passed from his memory. "Such coincidences are fewer than we should expect." Why, then, the shock to him, the silence, the unfading impression, and why after sixty years does he call it a *strange* dream? Manifestly Lord Brougham's mind was satisfied, or rather was drugged with reasons which should not convince. "We actually committed the *folly*," he says. If by "folly" profanity was not meant, which there is no reason to suppose, the only other meaning must be that it was a folly to seek for evidence which when given would be slightly rejected. I am

not insisting on the reality of what the person chiefly concerned pronounced to be an illusion, I am only exhibiting the kind of arguments with which the obstinate incredulity of our nature defends itself against conviction. Those arguments are manifestly excuses, not reasons. If we put them aside and come to the condition of mind which invents them, we find an unmistakeable unwillingness to believe in the immortality of the soul *as a fact*. Men believe in it willingly as a doctrine, and live and die wrapt in the ecclesiastical comfort which the doctrine lends, but it is undeniable that when the immortality of the soul confronts us in an actual instance we are unwilling to accept the evidence or admit the fact. Are we so bent on having this world to ourselves and on giving ourselves to this world that we will not allow the interference of the thought of another world? Do we choose to calculate our actions with reference to a life that terminates on earth? Or do we—for there is no subtlety of deception of which the mind of man is not capable—do we hold the mortality of the soul as a working theory, and its immortality as a curtain that hides the void from which we instinctively shrink? Do we hold two beliefs, one for this world and another for the next? As the calculation of chances meets us as the persistent explanation of visions, it will be right to remind ourselves that a death may occur without any corresponding simultaneous appearance or vision. A person who had pledged himself to appear may die without the thought occurring to him at the moment of dying, which seems a necessary condition, and in other cases the apparition may present itself incited by danger or the mere apprehension of death. If we take in presentiments generally, whether manifested in dreams, visions, or marked internal sympathies, they will very much reduce the multitude of cases within whose wide limits there was supposed to be room for a proportion of coincidences. I do not



include dreams as dreams, but as representing times when communications might otherwise have been made in an objective form. If we suppose for a moment that wraiths can appear in cases of death or danger of death, should the person to whom the communication comes be asleep at the time, it must come involved in the circumstances of a dream. Lord Byron used to tell that he heard from Captain Kidd that he was awakened in his hammock by feeling something heavy lying on him. He opened his eyes and saw, or thought he saw, by the indistinct light in the cabin, his brother, in uniform, lying across the bed. Concluding that this was only an illusion arising from some foregone dream, he closed his eyes again to sleep; but again he felt the weight, and there was the form still lying across the bed. He now stretched out his hand and felt the uniform, which was quite wet. Alarmed, he called for somebody to come to him, and as one of the officers entered, the figure disappeared. He afterwards learned that his brother was drowned that night in the Indian Ocean. One evening at a hotel in Rome a conversation was held between some visitors on the subject of supernatural appearances. When it closed, an American gentleman, who had listened in silence, came to me and said, "My wife had a dream in America, and wrote to a cousin in Ireland asking what had happened to her aunt at a certain hour on a certain day. The answer was that a letter must already have reached her announcing the death of her aunt at that precise date." As the aunt died while the niece slept, the intimation must come as a dream. But such cases should not be treated under the head of dreams. Again, there are cases where a waking presentiment marks the time when a friend or relative is dying. The headmaster of Clifton College, the Rev. J. M. Wilson, writes as follows in the work from which I have just quoted: "I was at Cambridge at the end of my second term, in full

health — boating, football playing, and the like, and by no means subject to hallucinations or morbid fancies. One evening I felt extremely ill, trembling, with no apparent cause whatever, nor did it seem to me at the time to be a physical illness, a chill of any kind. I was frightened. I was totally unable to overcome it. I remember a sort of struggle with myself, resolving that I *would* go on with my mathematics, but it was in vain. I became convinced that I was dying. I went down to the rooms of a friend, who was on the same staircase, and I remember that he exclaimed at once before I spoke. He put away his books, pulled out a whiskey bottle and a backgammon board, but I could not face it. We sat over the fire for a bit, and then he fetched some one else to have a look at me. I was in a strange discomfort, but with no symptoms I can recall, except mental discomfort, and the conviction that I should die that night. Towards eleven, after some three hours of this, I got better, and went upstairs, and got to bed, and after a time to sleep, and next morning was quite well. In the afternoon came a letter to say that my twin brother had died the evening before in Lincolnshire." Those presentiments may occur, though no death may have taken place. One day Bishop Wilberforce was presiding over a meeting of his clergy. He suddenly put his hand to his forehead, and seemed unconscious of what was going on around him. A well-known Archdeacon came to him, and asked if he was ill, and proposed getting a glass of wine for him. He replied that it was over now, and that the business might proceed. When the meeting dispersed, the Bishop said to the Archdeacon, "Some one dear to me has died," and he noted down the hour of the feeling. His son Reginald at that very time fell from a mast, on board a man of war, and was much injured, but not fatally. Again, in some instances there are visual appearances where there has not been

death. Georgina, Lady Chatterton, saw the figure of her mother, the face deadly pale, with blood flowing on the bed-clothes. She went to her mother's room, and found her in the condition described, with two doctors by her bed-side. "She would not allow you to be called," said one of the doctors, "lest your cold should be made worse, but the sight of you has done her much good."

The varied circumstances under which those manifestations are made and the way in which they are modified by circumstances, point rather to some general spiritual principle which works on every fitting occasion, than to a rigid law limited by special conditions. The forms of supernatural belief have differed in various times and countries: the same unknown truth may underlie them all. The wraiths of recent times, the witchcraft of the middle ages, the omens of the old world, may all have the same cause. We may be surrounded by an ocean of sympathy which interpenetrates wherever it finds channels of approach in the soul of man. Perhaps these channels are in course of formation. Perhaps man is becoming a "living soul" in some new way under a new phase of development. The gloom and terror that shut off former men from the world of spirits may be vanishing in proportion as the night is far spent and the day is at hand. The ties between the living and the dead may have been growing more tender during the centuries, and we may be dragging, at each remove, a shortening chain. With regard to the particular argument which I am now combatting, that grounded on the doctrine of chances, if we imagine the possibility of the whole matter, and take into account unnoticed fulfilments, failures of indispensable conditions, and perhaps, tentative cases, we may find that we have covered the whole ground of recorded or remembered supernatural phenomena that do not come under the head of disease.

Let it not be supposed that I am a believer in Ghosts. I am merely contending for liberty to believe if the evidence should convince me. I wish to have the right to examine the subject. We have not struggled out of all the superstitions of the past without having strengthened our love of free thought to such a degree as will save us from becoming silent slaves to the superstition of the dissecting room; and in case I should end by being a believer, and should indulge in the luxury of seeing a ghost myself, I think it well to provide, if I can, against being bled, or undergoing whatever is the modern equivalent for that once infallible remedy.

Let us before concluding glance for a moment at the spectres of the times we call classical. Plutarch, in his comparison of Dion and Brutus, tells that both were cut off by an untimely death, and that the most singular circumstance attending their deaths was, that both had a divine warning of it in the appearance of a frightful spectre. "There are some," he adds, "who say that no man in his senses has ever seen a spectre, that these are the visions of women and children, or of men whose intellects are affected by some infirmity of the body. But if Dion and Brutus, men of firm and philosophic minds, whose understandings were not affected by any constitutional malady, could pay so much credit to the appearance of spectres as to give an account of them to their friends, I see no reason why we should depart from the opinion of the ancients that men had their evil genii." The accounts of the two appearances are as follow: "Dion, while this conspiracy was on foot, was meditating one evening in the portico before his house, heard a sudden noise, and, turning about, perceived (for it was not yet dark) a woman of gigantic size at the end of the portico, in the form of one of the Furies, as they are represented in the theatre, sweeping the floor with a broom.

He sent for his friends in his terror, and kept them with him during the night." A little before he left Asia, "Brutus was sitting alone in his tent, by a dim light and at a late hour. The whole army lay in sleep and silence, while the General, wrapped in meditation, thought he perceived something enter his tent: turning towards the door he saw a horrible and monstrous spectre standing silently by his side. 'What art thou?' said he boldly; 'art thou god or man; and what is thy business with me?' The spectre answered, 'I am thy evil genius, Brutus. Thou wilt see me at Philippi.' To which he calmly replied, 'I will meet thee there.' When the apparition had gone he called his servants, who told him they had heard no noise nor seen any vision. That night he did not go to rest." The night before the battle the spectre is said to have appeared to him again, and to have vanished without speaking. Immediately before the battle, two eagles fought in the space between the two armies, and there was an incredible silence and attention on the field, till that on the side of Brutus was beaten and flew away. On the night before his death, as he sat and read in his tent, Julian—whom if we call apostate, we must add, from a false and corrupt Christianity—beheld the Genius of the State, who had appeared to him in Gaul the night before he was declared emperor, retreating from his tent with a dejected air, his head shrouded in a veil. Those will be said to have been dreams. We have in Roman history, however, an account of a dream clearly distinguishable as such. When Cæcina was saved by the approach of night from the fury of the conquering Germans, as he lay in his tent near the region where L. Varus had perished with his legions, he dreamed he saw Varus rising from the marshes, covered with blood, calling him, and reaching out his hand. He turned away from the call and the gesture. The trust in omens is part of our nature. At all times the mightiest in

power and pride on the eve of a great enterprise looked for a gleam of favour from heaven almost with the weakness of childhood. We are all so still. Should we be better if we trusted to ourselves for all? Those tales have a scenic value. Their terror is lost in a gloomy sublimity. They stalk fitly amid the tall columns and ruined palaces of the past.





## METHODS OF LITERARY WORK.

[Under this general title it is intended to print a series of short papers dealing with various practical aspects of the work of literature and journalism.]

---

### V.—TIMES AND SEASONS OF AUTHORSHIP.

BY C. E. TYRER.

IN one of Mr. O'Connor's admirable papers he describes the ascent of a Swiss mountain; and then, after dwelling on the grandeur of the prospect, expresses his dissatisfaction at not having been able then and there to extemporise a couple of cantos. And so, to some of us, the phrase, "Times and seasons of authorship," is apt to suggest occasions when we might, we think, have produced something fine, if anything fine were not out of our power. Some months ago, I climbed in the early morning the peak of the Stugunös, which rises a little to the north of what we may call the great western road of Southern Norway. Beneath me lay a chaos of gray snow-flecked rocky heights, with lakes of deep indigo filling up the hollows, while beyond, girdling the horizon from east to west, rose a multitude of fantastic peaks, bright with newly-fallen snow—the mountains of Jotunheim. One by one the peaks, clear at first, were veiled by ascending mists; but one majestic peak still remained

bare of mist and cloud, and riveted the gaze. It was certainly the sublimest scene on which I have ever looked; and those awful mountain solitudes seemed as remote and far away from one's ordinary life as if they had belonged to another planet. Long I stayed on that barren hill-top, gazing my fill, and attempting to put into language that scene of wild grandeur; but no words would come at my bidding, not even a sonnet, much less a couple of cantos. Perhaps, however, it is not altogether wise to make these occasions of high enjoyment the scenes of literary labour; we run the risk of marring our pleasure in nature, and likewise of perpetrating some very indifferent remarks in prose or verse. Natural beauty and sublimity, I take it, should rather stimulate and elevate our whole nature, and thus impart a higher tone to our work, then give us, then and there, a fit of *cacoethes scribendi*. We should remember and take to heart the late Lord Houghton's admirable lines—

Try not, or murmur not if tried in vain,  
 In fair rememberable words to set  
 Each scene or presence of especial gain,  
 Like hoarded gems in precious cabinet.  
 Merely enjoy the present loveliness,  
 Let it become a portion of your being.

In the second place, men of real greatness are not much dependent on external stimuli for the exercise of their genius. No doubt poets—that *irritable genus*—are more so dependent than other writers; but if they have within them a true well-spring of inspiration, they need not go a-begging of passing impulses and incentives, however willing they may be to use them. It is only, as R. L. Stevenson says somewhere, the "professional amateur" (as he calls him), who makes so much of great and famous scenes. A true poet finds as much inspiration in a dried rose leaf, or "a primrose by the river's brim," as in Mont



Blanc or Niagara. All nature and all life alike are sacred to him, and he need not travel to distant lands to gain that delight which is the eternal inspiration of his song.

As for the question of times and seasons, as affecting writers of books in general, no doubt many interesting anecdotes might be collected by one who was well read in literary history, but whether any valuable practical advice could be based upon such an array of authorities is not at all certain. It is undoubtedly very much a matter of idiosyncrasy, of habit—and, with many of us, of business and family necessities—and probably an investigation of the kind would lead to conclusions of no more practical value than one which was recently undertaken into the habits of literary men in regard to the use of wine and tobacco, and experience of their effects. Some men find the early morning hours the best—when the day is yet pure and unstained by earthly cares and vexations, nor has taken its impress from intercourse with the world. It is said of Victor Hugo (I will not vouch for the fact) that he found it impossible to write a line after he had touched animal food. On the other hand, how many men trim the midnight lamp—and find they can best compose their thoughts, and put them on paper, when all around is quiet and the day's excitements are at an end. Certainly those writers are the happiest who have fixed hours of work, and, given a certain measure of health, can always rely on a certain power of production—like Southey, who, whether he was writing an epic or a sober treatise, composed as his day's work a certain regulated number of lines. At whatever times inclination or necessity may lead us to write, we should, if possible, have definite hours of literary labour—knowing that regularity is, for most men, one of the most valuable auxiliaries of success. Southey had a friend and a frequent visitor, who had a much finer genius

than himself, but who, for want of concentration and habits of steady work, accomplished comparatively little. There is a warning for all of us, be our powers great or small, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Again, of the seasons of the year. Do men write best in spring, thus harmonising with the creative spirit in nature and the young life which is stirring all round them, or when summer holds high festival; or in autumn, when the harvest sheaves are being gathered in, do they also garner most profitably the harvest of the year? It is said that Milton found the impulse of creation strongest in spring, and wrote much more at that season than at any other time. Spring, the season of hope, the youth of the year, must always have a special charm and a sweet provocative-ness for the sensitive race of poets, however ready many of them may be to celebrate the melancholy attractions of autumn. But perhaps autumn and winter are generally, for men of letters, the most productive. In one of John Burroughs' charming essays, there is a passage on this head which may be worth quoting: "In the spring one vegetates; his thoughts turn to sap; another kind of activity seizes him; he makes new wood which does not harden till past midsummer. For my part, I find all literary work irksome from April to August; my sympathies run in other channels; the grass grows where meditation walked. As fall approaches, the currents mount to the head again."

Again, of the periods of human life—youth, manhood, and age—what shall we say, but that it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules. It is sometimes asserted that a man's best work is done early in life, but there are many instances to the contrary. Cowper, I believe, was unaware of his poetical gifts till he was led to exercise them as an alleviation of his affliction; and neither George

Eliot nor Mrs. Gaskell seems to have discovered, till well on in life, her genuine vocation. And to take greater names, we have Dante in his long exile and Milton in his blind old age writing their immortal poems; Vondel, publishing at the age of 67, his epic of "Lucifer," which placed its author at the head of the poets of Holland, and perhaps influenced Milton; and Goethe devoting himself, at the age of 80, to the second part of his "Faust." Perhaps, if the passionate lyric be especially suited to the period of youth, and the drama to mature life, the epic in its monumental grandeur may fitly occupy a poet's closing years. We have, in two venerable poets of our own country, living examples to show that the decline of life is not necessarily associated with decline of the intellectual and imaginative powers. The authors of "Rizpah" and "Dramatic Idyls" have still little to fear from comparison with any of their youthful compeers, and both, perchance, have found the truth of the words which one of them has put into the mouth of his "Rabbi Ben Ezra:"—

Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby :  
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold :  
And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame :  
Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall know, being old.

Sometimes the approach of death seems to have a specially illuminating and inspiring effect, and a man when near his end has written truer and deeper words than ever before in his life-time. Lord Byron wrote few things more noble or more sincere than those deeply pathetic lines beginning "Tis time this heart should be unmoved," written within a few months of his death, of which they may be said to have been prophetic. There are few sweeter lyrical strains in European poetry than Wergeland's exquisite verses,

*Til min Gyldenlak* (To my Wallflower), which he dictated on his deathbed. And Keats himself left behind him nothing, perhaps, more subtly beautiful than the sonnet "Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art," composed when he was already embarked on what proved to be his fatal voyage to Italy.

The conclusion, therefore, which I would draw from these desultory remarks is that in matters relating to the "when" and "how" of authorship, every one in the last resort must be a guide to himself, however willing he may be to profit by the experience of others.

An age like this, and a community like our own, are distinctly unfavourable to the production of what is high and enduring in literature and art. Harassed as we are with petty cares and ignoble anxieties, and with painful practical problems on all hands pressing for solution, art and letters are in danger of being thrust aside, or, at least, of being treated merely as toys for our idle hours, and not as worthy of man's noblest energies. Reckless despair and heartless frivolity—towards one of these two extremes we tend now-a-days evermore to oscillate; and both are equally hostile to that equipoise, that serenity of nature, which are needful for the artist and the man of letters, if they aim at what is truly great. How different in these respects was the Athens of Pericles, the Florence of Cosmo de Medici, even the London of Elizabeth, from the London or Manchester of to-day? Then it seemed easy to write, or carve, or paint, greatly—greatness was, so to speak, in the air, and the delight of the artist in his work was reflected in the delight of the multitude. But though the joyful serenity of the early ages of art may never return, we are not left without comfort—in the fair face of nature, in the essential nobility of man, in the hope of the final triumph of good. Especially to nature, with its suggestions of a

larger life, its inexhaustible charm, may he turn for help and inspiration :

" Ah, once more," I cried, " ye stars, ye waters !  
On my heart your mighty charm renew :  
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
Feel my soul becoming vast like you."

For it is only from happiness and serenity of spirit that great work usually proceeds; and perhaps we in this restless age may best attain some portion of these blessings by that communion with nature, which, while it cheers uncongenial toil, is full of sweet provocation to the congenial labours of the poet and man of letters.

---

#### VI.—ON SOME CONDITIONS OF AUTHORSHIP.

BY JOHN MORTIMER.

I MUST confess that I have been very much interested in the subjects grouped under the general heading of "Methods of Literary Work," and my interest has deepened with continued contemplation. Not that I find myself in a position to deal seriously with any one of them, for I should as soon think of writing an essay "On the Formation of Character" as of giving advice concerning indexing, commonplace books, the arrangement of pamphlets, or the times and seasons of authorship. It was an odd coincidence, therefore, that when I had scarcely finished writing the first of these two sentences there should come from the worthy secretary of this club a note intimating that my name had been connected with the last of these subjects—"Times and Seasons of Authorship"—and expressing a hope that I would be prepared with my communication. It was evident that there had been a

mistake somewhere, for I had no knowledge of such an engagement, and, moreover, I thought I detected a fine irony in the suggestion, but as my mind had already been led into a groove of thought not altogether alien to the matter in hand, I must ask you to allow me to follow it, though the result should be little more than the idlest gossip. "Times and Seasons of Authorship?" said I to myself, "What has a lazy loiterer in the paths of literature to tell of such things?" And then there came into my mind those lines of Tennyson—

The times when some new thought can bud  
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower.

That being so, how can we fix the seasons or tell when the thought can bud? And so the whole difficulty of the subject presents itself. I have had my experiences, it is true, though my pretensions to authorship are of the most modest and trivial kind; but I shrink from relating them. They might possibly serve for warning; but as regards precept or example, they would be absolutely worthless. To me the thing savours too much of confession. I suppose, only with sorrow and shame ought I to admit, that I have never kept a commonplace book, arranged an index, or seriously used a note book. As for preparation of manuscript, the less said the better. I should not like to call an editor or compositor who has ever dealt with it as a witness to character. And as for the seasons when thought has crystallized itself into written words, I know no other law regulating that than the direst necessity. Let me not be misunderstood, however; I do not glory in my shame. As a miserable sinner I meekly admit that order is heaven's first law. I regard with pious contemplation and have the greatest reverence for the men of method in literary as in all other work, and can recognise that higher consciousness which requires that handwriting should be as much a

fine art as the thought which it conveys. Such qualities in authors are to me as admirable as "the primal duties that shine aloft like stars." I know that some of the best writers have displayed these qualities. I call to mind Thackeray, among others, and George Eliot. I was looking the other day at a facsimile of some manuscript by the latter, and could not but admire its exquisite neatness. On the other hand, I know that some of the best writers have written badly, for instance, Jeffrey and Sydney Smith, but I feel that this was a dereliction of duty which detracts from their greatness. Then, too, the literary man whose mind is well regulated, and whose work is subject to rule and method, must always have the advantage over one whose habits are careless and irregular. His commonplace books, arranged pamphlets, and other such methods, form, as it were, the scaffolding and materials by which literary edifices are built up. They are invaluable in that constructive department which is called compilation, and "which consists in collecting and stating all that is already known of any question in the best possible manner for the benefit of the uninformed reader." Some people, however, never get beyond the scaffolding and the collection of materials. Hazlitt tells of a man of considerable sense and ability, but whose mind seemed to move in an element of littleness, whose whole work was a series of sketches and preparations, and whose whole object in art was to erect scaffoldings. "The same intense interest in the most frivolous things extended to the common concerns of life, to the arranging of his letters, the labelling of his books, and the inventory of his wardrobe."

These things, handwriting, arrangement of materials, and preparation of manuscript, all relate to the expression of literary effort. The real workshop, however, is the mind of the author, and here it is difficult to lay down rules, or

prescribe methods. Take, for instance, the greatest of all the departments of literature, the creative. How are you to guide a poet in his work? It is related of a certain noble duke, of convivial habits, that he was wont to set apart a certain day and say that on that day he purposed being drunk, and he was drunk accordingly. But a poet, I take it, could hardly, with the same certainty of fulfilment, declare that on a certain day he would write a poem. A hundred things might intervene. His imagination might fail by reason of dyspepsia, or the fogs of worldly care come between him and the ineffable light. No methods of literary arrangement would help him then, and the time and season would hardly be of his choosing. However he might desire it, the inspiration might not be forthcoming. Cowper, in one of these lapses, writes thus to Newton:—"Carraccioli says, 'There is something very bewitching in authorship, and he who has once written will write again.' It may be so—I can subscribe to the former part of his assertion from my own experience, having never found an amusement, among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the future (those themes which to me are so fruitful of regret at other times) had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason I wish, and have often wished, since the fit left me, that it would seize me again, but I have hitherto wished in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them."

Much pleasanter is it to regard Cowper in that study of his which he describes to Lady Hesketh, and says, "I long to show you my workshop, and to see you sitting on the



opposite side of my table. We shall be as close packed as two wax figures in an old-fashioned picture frame. I am writing in it now; it is the place in which I fabricate all my verses in summer time. I rose an hour sooner than usual this morning that I might finish my sheet before breakfast. . . . The grass under my windows is all bespangled with dewdrops, and the birds are singing in the apple trees, among the blossoms. Never poet had a more commodious oratory in which to invoke his muse."

Shelley is an illustration of a poet who could write under the pressure of distressing circumstances. While the Chancery suit was on in which the custodianship of his children was in question, and he, himself, under the shadow of what he thought was coming death, he worked as he floated in his boat on the Thames under the beautiful beech groves of Bisham. It is interesting to know that he composed in the open air whenever he could. On the roofs and terraces of Italian villas, on the summits of the Euganean hills, and in the pine woods he wrote his loveliest poems and lyrics, and the "Triumph of Life" was transferred to paper as he sailed in his boat upon the Bay of Spezia. How varied have been the conditions under which the poet's season of flowering has come? One thinks with Wordsworth of Chatterton, "the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul, who perished in his pride;" of Burns, following the plough on the mountain side; and of Heine lying through the years on his "mattress grave" in Paris.

It was a custom with some of the older poets to tell their readers where, or under what circumstances, their thoughts had budded. So we have in Shelley, "Lines written in Dejection near Naples;" in Coleridge, "Lines composed in a Concert Room," and, "From the Lime Tree Bower, my prison," with an explanatory note, telling how

the poet was detained there by an accident, and unable to join his friends in an evening walk. Then, again, there are "Lines to a Young Ass, its mother being tethered near it." The explanation sometimes lengthens the title, as when we have this, "Stanzas addressed to a lady on her recovery, with unblemished looks, from a severe attack of pain." Wordsworth wrote anywhere and everywhere. He has given us, "Lines written in a Boat at Evening," "Lines left upon a seat at Esthwaite," "Lines written upon a stone at Grasmere," "Lines written upon a stone at Blackcomb," "Lines written upon a stone at Rydal," lines to his sister, "written at a small distance from my house, and sent by my little boy." Cowper gives us, "Lines after the manner of Homer, on opening a hamper," "Lines on the death of Mrs. Throckmorton's bullfinch," and "Verses written at Bath on finding the heel of a shoe." Shennstone's poetry is often attached to odd places, such as garden seats, and stones, and urns. The "Here in cool grot and mossy cell" is an inscription on the tablet of a garden house, and those fine lines of his—

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,  
Where'er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome at an inn—

were written at an inn at Henley. And, to come from these luminaries to a local poet of the later time, who touches us in this club with a neighbourly nearness; there is a story extant, the truth of which I have no reason to doubt, that Edwin Waugh wrote his pathetic ballad, "Com' whoam to thi childer an me," as he sat at the table beneath the clock in the smoke-room of that departed hostelry known as the "Old Clarence."

In the department of criticism, too, a writer can hardly arrange his own seasons of effort, or say when he will be

able to think to any purpose. If a man has the power to think out his subject beforehand, has a clear mental vision of the whole, writing, then, is a mere matter of expression. Hazlitt says, "Habit gives promptness, and the soul of despatch is decision. One man may write a book or paint a picture while another is deliberating about the plan or the title page. The great painters were able to do so much because they knew exactly what they meant to do, and set about it. They were thoroughbred workmen, and were not learning the art while they were exercising it. One can do a great deal in a short time, if one only knows how. Thus an author may become very voluminous who only employs an hour or two in a day in study. If he has once obtained, by habit or reflection, a use of his pen, with plenty of materials to work upon, the pages vanish before him. The time lost is in beginning, or in stopping after we have begun. If we only go forward with spirit and confidence we shall soon arrive at the end of our journey. A practised writer ought never to hesitate for a sentence from the moment he sets pen to paper, or think about the course he is to take. He must trust to his previous knowledge of the subject, and to his immediate impulses, and he will get to the close of his task without accidents or loss of time. I can easily understand how the old divines and controversialists produced their folios. I could write folios myself, if I rose early and sat up late at this kind of occupation. But I confess I should soon be tired of it, besides wearying the reader." But then, again, in another place, Hazlitt says, of his own experience, "I have not much pleasure in writing these essays, or in reading them afterwards. . . . After I begin them I am only anxious to get to the end of them, which I am not sure I shall do, for I seldom see my way a page, or even a sentence,

beforehand, and when I have as by a miracle escaped, I seldom trouble myself little more about them. I sometimes have to write them twice over; then it is necessary to read the proof, to prevent mistakes by the printer; so that by the time they appear in a tangible shape, and one can con them over with a conscious, side-long glance to the public approbation, they have lost their gloss and relish, and become more tedious than a 'twice-told tale.'

In this connection our essayist has something more to say about the disregard by an author of what he has written, which must commend itself to the sympathies of many other writers:—"While we are engaged in any work, we are thinking of the subject, and cannot stop to admire ourselves, and when it is done we look at it with comparative indifference. I will venture to say that no one but a pedant ever read his own works regularly through. . . . When we have once committed our thoughts to paper, written them fairly out, and seen that they are right in the printing, if we are in our right wits we have done with them for ever."

I have already said that "the times when thought shall bud" are elusive and not to be predetermined. But one thing is certain; we must place our minds in a receptive attitude before the idea will come. In this connection I had in my mind a passage of Emerson which I had read years ago, but could not lay my hand on. Here a commonplace book would have been of great assistance, and have saved me an hour or two in finding it. It reads thus: "What is the hardest task in the world? To think. I would put myself in the attitude to look in the eye of an abstract truth and I cannot. I blench and withdraw on this side and on that. . . . For example, a man explores the basis of civil government. Let him intend his mind without respite, without rest, in one direction. His best

heed long time avails him nothing. Yet thoughts are flitting before him. We all but apprehend, we dimly forebode the truth. We say, I will walk abroad, and the truth will take form and clearness to me. We go forth, but cannot find it. It seems as if we needed only the stillness and composed attitude of the library to seize the thought. But we come in and are as far from it as at first. Then in a moment, and unannounced, the truth appears. A certain wandering light appears and is the distinction, the principle, we wanted. But the oracle comes because we had previously laid siege to the shrine."

There is another writer, not so profound as Emerson, whose graceful philosophy has a charm of its own, who has described the birth of ideas in his mind. The author of *Companions of my Solitude* who thought much in the open air, says, "These companions of my solitude, my reveries, take many forms. Sometimes the nebulous stuff out of which they are formed comes together with some method and set purpose, and may be compared to a heavy cloud—then they will do for an essay or moral discourse; at other times they are merely like those sportive disconnected forms of vapour, which are streaked across the heavens, now like a feather, now like the outline of a camel, doubtless obeying some law and with some design, but such as mocks our observation; at other times again, they arrange themselves like those fleckered clouds where all the heavens are regularly broken up in small divisions, lying evenly over each other with light between each. The result of the last-mentioned state of reverie is well brought out in conversation."

Regarding the birth of ideas and the plastic power of the mind in dealing with them, George Eliot says, in one of her letters to her publisher, "My stories grow like plants, and this is only in the leaf and bud; I have faith

though that the flower will come. Not enough faith though to make me like the idea of beginning to print till the flower is fairly out, till I know the end as well as the beginning." And again, regarding *Silas Marner*, she says, "I am writing a story which came across my other plans by a sudden inspiration. It is a story of old-fashioned village life which has unfolded itself from the merest millet seed of thought. . . . It came to me first of all quite suddenly as a sort of legendary tale, suggested by my recollection of having once in early childhood seen a linen weaver with a bag on his back." George Eliot, too, experienced that necessity of distance, of perspective, and selection, before the artist's faculty can be exercised upon its materials. She says, "My mind works with the most freedom and the keenest sense of poetry in my remotest past, and there are many strata to be worked through before I can begin to use artistically any material I may gather at present." She had her periods of depression, in which she despaired of her work; times when she described herself as unwell, utterly desponding about her book, "still with incapable head trying to write, trying to construct, and unable." Then again, under strong emotion and possessed by her subject she would write rapidly, completing the third volume of *Adam Bede* in six weeks; and of the last eleven pages of *The Mill on the Floss*, she says, "They were written in a furor, but I daresay there is not a word different from what it would have been if I had written them at the slowest pace."

It is always interesting to me to know the conditions under which my favourite authors have worked. That search for the paragraph in Emerson had its compensation, because it led me to glance again at the author's sympathetic appreciation of Montaigne. I had been reading Montaigne, had sat with him in his library, and heard him

discourse in his delightfully egotistic and somewhat exaggerated fashion about his own literary life, his virtues and defects. He says, "My works are so far from pleasing me that as oft as I peruse them they disgust me.

When I peruse, I blush at what I've writ,  
And think 'tis only for the fire fit.

I have always an idea in my mind of a better form than that I have made use of, but I cannot catch it, nor fit it to my purpose. . . . All I write is rude and wants polishing and beauty. I cannot set things off to the best advantage; my handling adds nothing to the matter." His memory, he tells us, is bad. "My library, which is of the best sort of country libraries, is situated in one corner of my house. If anything comes into my head that I have a mind to look for, or to write out, lest I should forget it, in but going across the court, I am forced to commit it to the memory of some other. If I venture in speaking to digress never so little from my subject I am infallibly lost, which is the reason, that, in discourse I keep strictly close to my text. . . . I do not receive a commission without entering it in a book; and when I have a speech of consequence to make, if it be long, I am reduced to the vile necessity of getting word for word what I am to say by heart. . . . My hands are so benumbed that I can only write so as to read it myself; so that I had rather mend what I have scribbled than take the trouble to write it out fair, and I do not read much better than I write. I cannot handsomely fold up a letter, nor could ever make a pen, or carve at table, nor saddle a horse." Though one must take all these confessions with a grain of salt, how much comfort there is for the writer who seeks refuge in the better expressed thoughts of greater minds, in this, "He that seeks after knowledge, let him fish for it where it is

to be found; this being a thing which I so little profess.

. . . Let not the subjects I write on be so much attended to as my manner of treating them. Let it be observed, whether in what I borrow from others, I have chosen what tends to set off or support the invention which is always my own: for I make others say for me what, either from want of language or sense, I cannot myself, so well express. I do not count what I borrow, but I weigh it. And if I had aimed to make a merit by the quantity, I should have borrowed twice as much as I have."

Of those who have wielded the pens of ready writers in modern times, the novelists are conspicuous. How rapidly Scott wrote is well known. Guided by his active brain, his pen flew over the paper, and the sheets of manuscript fell from under it as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa. Wonderful, when you think of it, that what was so written should stand the test of time and criticism. There is a story told of a party, composed of young barristers, being held in the library of a house adjoining Scott's, which commanded a view of the room in which he was writing. The narrator, who was a guest, says: "After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend (who dwelt in the house), who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. 'No,' said he, 'I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will.' I rose to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to me this hand which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. 'Since we sat down,' he said, 'I have been watch-



ing it—it fascinates my eye, it never stops—page after page is finished, and thrown on that heap of manuscript, and still it goes on unwearied; and so it will be until the candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand a sight of it when I am not at my books.' 'Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk probably,' exclaimed myself, or some other giddy youth in our society. 'No, boys,' said our host, 'I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's.'"

Scott's brightest time of writing, we are told, was in the morning, "but morning or evening, in country or in town, well or ill, writing with his own pen or dictating to an amanuensis in the intervals of screaming fits, due to the torture of cramp in the stomach, Scott spun away at his imaginative web almost as evenly as a silkworm spins at its golden cocoon." To go back to Cowper, it may be noted by the way that he, too, did much of his work in the morning. He says in one of his letters to Hayley, excusing himself for a long delayed reply, "I rise at six every morning, and fag till near eleven, when I breakfast. The consequence is, that I am so exhausted as not to be able to write when the opportunity offers. You will say 'breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you.' I answer, perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I cannot spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study."

More recently Anthony Trollope has told us himself under what conditions he worked, and with what rapidity. By nature or habit he came to work with the regularity of a machine. He tells us that it was his custom to be at his work-table at half-past five in the morning, being called up by an old groom, who never failed in his duty. There he sat, with his watch before him, turning out words

at the rate of 250 every quarter of an hour, and this went on for the best part of three hours. This could only be done by a trained mind coming to its work filled with the subject, unattainable, as he says, by any one who "sits nibbling his pen and gazing at the wall before him till he shall have found words with which he wants to express his ideas." Trollope could work in railway trains, in steam-boats, or in the streets, and always apparently with the same level of facility. He says: "I always had a pen in my hand; whether crossing the seas or fighting with American officials, or tramping about the streets of Beverley, I could do a little, and generally more than a little." He regarded his work from the same practical standpoint as an artisan or mechanic. As a shoemaker when he has finished making one pair of shoes commences another, so he lost no time in contemplation after he had finished a novel, but at once began again. Whether the highest work can be done under such conditions, or whether the man who carves the stonework can work under the same conditions with him who lays the stones in a building, is not within our province to enquire here. It was Trollope's boast that he did more novel spinning within a given time than any other writer living. In the matter of commencing new work as soon as the old was finished, Thackeray resembled him. He says: "As soon as a piece of work is out of hand, and before going to sleep, I like to begin another; it may be to write only half a dozen lines, but that is something towards number the next." With Trollope's habit of writing in the early morning, I confess I have some sympathy, and should have more if it had been his custom to write in bed. In this latter respect, there is a precedent in Pope's case. We are told that, "He had his writing desk set upon his bed every day before he got up, and Lord Oxford's servant

complained that one bitter night she was called out of bed four times to supply him with paper lest he should lose a thought." Dickens, I imagine, was an orderly and regular man, but I do not remember sufficient of Forster's *Life* to say what his habits were. He kept a note-book, but I believe only for a limited period, and did not use it to any great extent. That view of his study at Gad's Hill, with its neat arrangement of desk and chair before the open window, that absence of litter and orderly show of books on the shelves, seems to indicate a neat and precise man. Looking at it there came into my mind a vision of another writer who worked under conditions of quite another kind. It is of De Quincey in one of his numerous dens in Edinburgh, snowed up "with litter of manuscripts, paper, and books, many of them borrowed, with small chance of finding their way back to the owners." Mr. Hill Burton tells us of an adventurous book-lender seeking to recover a book, who "forced his way into the Cacus den, and there saw a sort of rubble-work inner wall of volumes, with their edges outwards, while others, bound and unbound, the plebeian sheepskin and the aristocratic russian, were squeezed into certain tubs drawn from the washing establishment of a confiding landlady." Sometimes he ran short of paper to write on, and then he would not hesitate to tear out the most convenient leaves of any broad-margined book, whether belonging to himself or another. "Nay, it is said he once gave in copy written on the edges of a tall octavo *Somnium Scipionis*; and as he did not obliterate the original matter, the printer was rather puzzled, and made a funny jumble between the letterpress Latin and the manuscript English."

From so disordered a workshop, however, came beautiful work which has become classic, and manuscript of singular neatness and regularity. It would have been useless to

preach to De Quincey about the virtue of order. Genius has been described as the capacity for taking pains, but you must leave genius to decide upon what the pains shall be bestowed. There was no slovenliness or carelessness about De Quincey's work, and after all it is the matter more than the manner of doing it that is of serious consequence. There is a sort of fate regulating the products of the mind. As Emerson says, "Each mind has its own method. A true man never acquires after college rules." The mind, too, can only work within its own limits, and produce what is in it to produce. As George Eliot says, "Your duck can only go on laying blue eggs, however white ones may be in request." In literature, as in all other forms of life, it is true that—

Each on his own strict line we move,  
and every author must in some sense be a law unto himself.





## A NATURALIST'S SABBATH.

BY THOMAS KAY.

Far from the city's endless din,  
Where bright flowers bloom, where glad streams rin,  
Gurgling o'er many a mimic linn,  
    Wl' ceaseless sang  
    To rove amang

Fair Nature's scenes, my muse begin.      THOMAS NEWBIGGING.

ON the Sabbath morn, when the sound of the "church going bell" awakes us to a day of strange stillness in our much-trodden streets, and the sun shines brightly through a clear atmosphere, unpolluted by the smoke from the countless chimneys, and when the blunted spires (the round towers of our industries) stand in high relief against the greenish-grey sky line in rosy tones, I like to retire into the woods to solitude and meditation.

It has been a late spring. Easter has come and gone, leaving cold east winds, which retard vegetation, and this is the dawn of summer, ushered in by a few days of genial sunshine. On a bank which lies wedgelike between two small tributaries of the Mersey, on the sward where the young grass rises through the withered ferns, prone to earth, broken and bent by the storms of winter, I recline at mine ease. The sun illuminates the moss-covered branches of the trees with a rich emerald brightness as they stand against the dark purple undergrowth of the opposite hill. There is hardly a blossom on tree or flower in the field, but a few wood anemones (harbingers of

spring) spot the earth with their patines of purity and beauty, as brilliant on the woodland carpet as the morning star in the vault of heaven; and the hyacinth of the glades puts forth its lance-like leaves in promise of fairy bells for the grassy slopes.

Minute insects, only visible in the sun's rays, disappear in the shadows and a tiny spider, inverted on an invisible thread, treads its way across a chasm which extends from a bramble to the top of a bracken stem. A ladybird alights and buries itself under the dead leaves. It soon reappears and raising its hard crimson cases, it slowly unfolds its tissue-like wings as a ship unfurls its sails, and poising with them thus erect for a moment like a diver about to make his plunge, it suddenly leaps forth into the air and soars away with a gentle pleasing sound. The humble bee, in its booming flight, seems to pursue a profitless quest except amongst the catkins, which hang in velvet tassels from the leafless willow. The ivy, with its currant-like fruit and evergreen foliage, tops the silver birch and smothers it in its embrace; whilst the honeysuckle, with its budding leaves, hangs in festoons from the many-branched alder, decorating its ungainliness and enveloping with sweetness the sad denizen of the swampy soil.

On some hidden branch behind the honeysuckle a robin is twittering his love song—the sweetest of the choir; the sonorous thrush is singing across the brook and the plovers, disturbed on the meadow above, utter their plaintive cry. On high the trill of a lark, “at heaven’s gate singing,” is faintly heard and the blackbird, with its loud chatter, rushes through the brake, whilst the constant cheep! cheep! cheep! of the small birds blends with the murmur of the brook. The harsh crow of the pheasant is heard from the bosky depths of the valley and a large hawk is wheeling high aloft. The magpies

with their harsh scream flit from bough to bough on the look out for eggs or young, their taste for carrion debauched by the succulent fledglings of spring; and a pair of stock doves, cooing with their melodious note amongst the distant trees, complete the chorus of the woods.

A young rabbit sits up with ears erect some twenty paces off, and probably wonders what *he* can be who sits so still, and has a wreath of smoke ascending from his mouth. What can it think of him? the ogre destined to eat him up. Let us assume that it possesses a power of imagination like that of a child, and that it is frightened from straying away by nursery tales of goblins and rabbit-eating giants, then one need not wonder at its hereditary timidity, for man indeed would be craven-hearted in the presence of the dangers which constantly surround *it*. First, of the *genus homo*, he has wire nooses and more cruel traps, with other deadly devices, to waylay it as it steals out "in the gloaming" to play with its fellows like an elf on the knolls. The dew on the grass which glistens in the morning sun, as diamonds on a garment, when brushed away reveals its track as a deep green ribbon across nature's jewelled embroidery only to betray it to him who invents engines for its captivity and death. The sinuous stoat and the weasel of evil eye hunt it so persistently that the poor rabbit from its very fear falls an easy victim to its cruel foe. Dogs hunt it through the bushes, and cats, both wild and tame, watch for its evening appearance. Birds of prey, both day and night, are ready to pick it up and carry it off to the eyrie, or into the ivy-clad oak, where screech owls rear their young; or into the topmost forks of the fir trees, where carrion crows build and magpies make their nests; and so a race is developed, the product of persecution, justified of its descent.

The crackling of a distant foot on dry twigs startles the timid beast, and away it runs to safety.

From the fence which skirts the wood a loud whistle like that of a thrush is heard. The keeper, who has approached, says, "It is a sedgecock."

"Is that what we call a field fare?" I ask.

"No! The field fare is blue backed, and does not breed here; the sedgecock or storm cock, as some call it, is like the throistle, but it is larger. It is one of our first nesting birds."

Whilst thus talking, the valley is filled with a smoke-like vapour, the sun shining dimly through it.

"There is going to be a change of weather," says the keeper.

In a few minutes the wind veers completely round; the dead leaves on the saplings, hanging by the delicate fibres of their stems, whirl on their axes, many of them taking wing for a last flight to mother earth and decay; and the startled rabbits rush through the bushes to their friendly burrows. The fog gradually lifts out of the valley and dark clouds form above, so we return slowly to the farm and are pleased to find that the swallows have just arrived. They are popping in and about the old nests, measuring for the repairs necessitated by the frost and winter's storms, and the newly married ones are selecting sites for their honeymoon. What a delight must be theirs after wandering for weary months in foreign climes, driven by inexorable winter across the ocean and mountains, to return once more to the place of their nativity where they were fed and fledged, to their English home. What reminiscences of youth and hope, of errors and troubles, joys and sorrows must be theirs as they dash past the barn and skim the brook to gather again the insects of England, which are now dancing in



the declining sunbeams in rhythmical waves over the still pools.

All Nature rejoices at the coming spring, "For lo! the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." As it was three thousand years ago so is it now. The heart of man is lifted up and new feelings are born within him. In spring he "puts forth the tender leaves of hope;" in summer he blossoms and "bears the blushing honours thick upon him;" in autumn he triumphs in fruition; and winter presages unto him death in its dark nights and short days, by "the churlish chiding of the winter's wind and its killing frosts;" but as

Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like a toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head,

so the new birth, the rejuvenescence of plants and creeping things and insects and birds and higher animals even to man, as expressed in the joy of his heart, lift him out of the torpidity of the winter which is past, to sing with our poet—

Hail, lovely Nature! ever dear,  
Whether as spring thou hoverest near,  
Or summer sweet, or autumn aere  
With blessings crowned,  
Or icy bound,  
Clad in cold winter's garment drear.

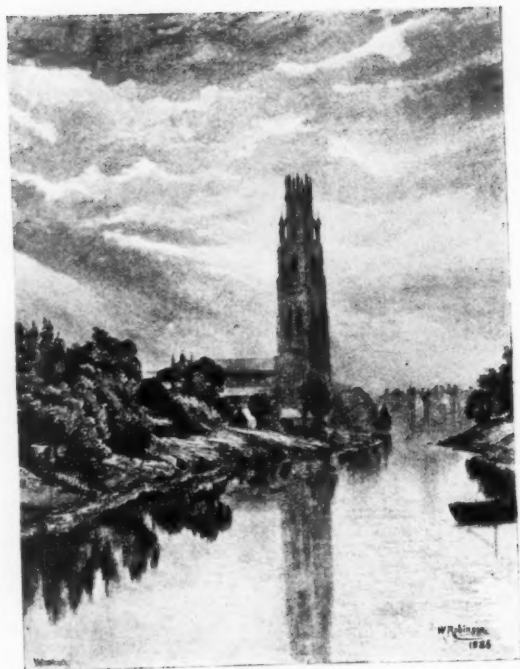
And so it is that often in the summer time I return to the woods of Marple, where—

The world of wealth! the bright wild flowers,  
The Summer walks, the sunny hours,  
The spreading tree that high o'er towers,  
The babbling brook,  
The lonely nook,  
The dingle deep, the shady bowers!

give a welcome rest from the toils and cares of office, and time glides on as smoothly as our revolving sphere which is buffeted by storms, and burnt in the furnace of the fiery Sun-god; yet still it has its cycles of peace, plenty, and prosperity, in foretaste, let us hope, of the happy millenium, and this, our Sabbath, is one of them, a welcome rest from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" when spent in sweet communings with Nature, our common parent.







BOSTON CHURCH.



## THE ART OF SEEING.

BY WILLIAM ROBINSON.

I WAS once standing sketching by a roadside in Dorset about the first week in November, the elms and beeches being most gorgeously arrayed in crimson and gold, when a farmer who was passing stopped to watch me. By and by a gentleman on horseback, also passing, pulled up his steed and gazed likewise. At last the farmer, turning to the horseman, said: "It's grand, isn't it!" then, with a wondering look at the reality in nature, he said: "And it is grand too! I've never noticed it before."

Many remarks of a similar nature I have heard in all parts of the country, showing how many people pass through the world gifted with the organs of vision, yet utterly blind to the wonderful beauty manifested in the objects by which they are surrounded. "Eyes have they, but they see not." Powers of vision are like other faculties—uncultivated they are barren of results—abused they become distorted or destroyed. If then we can discover some of the principles which ought to guide us in the development of our powers of vision, I think it will be a justification of the title of this paper—"The art of seeing."

That vision is not merely a physical, but also a mental power, I need not stop to prove. Anyone knows that a person may have his physical eyes wide open, and fixed as it were upon some object which he nevertheless does not see if the mind be completely abstracted in the consideration of some other subject. It is therefore necessary that we use the mind as well as the eye in our efforts to see rightly.

Taking notice, therefore, is the primary principle in the art of seeing. When the little babe first opens its tiny lids it appears to see nothing, or is influenced only by the light. But as the infant soul begins to look through those liquid orbs, surrounding objects come to be recognised, and it is said to take notice of things. Its recognition of the things around is of course very hazy and indistinct, but the one upon whom its tender powers are exercised and whose image grows most in definition is its nursing mother.

This brings us to the enunciation of the second essential in the art of seeing, a warm and loving sympathy with the object gazed upon. The activity of this sympathy reveals to the lover's ardent gaze such beauties in the face of his beloved as the ordinary eye, looking unsympathetically at the mere lines and features, fails to discover. Hence a cold and haughty critic is least fitted to be a pioneer in the discovery of tender beauty. A self-satisfied and unteachable spirit can discern none of the subtler aspects or inner and diviner beauty of things. But more of this as we proceed. The efforts often made to express the ideas of the forms which are seen show how crude are our first realisations of beauty. Take that rude idea of a figure which is conceived by the untrained eye. An irregular ball represents the head, with certain spots and strokes indicating eyes, nose, and mouth. Two short

straight lines do duty for the neck, whilst a large elongated rounded shape represents the trunk, from which project or depend certain lines by way of legs and arms, terminating in the regulation number of sticks for fingers and toes. Such figures represent the earliest efforts of children to pourtray the human form divine. And the battered wooden-headed doll which has delighted so many children, and upon which so much affection has often been lavished is carved in a similar manner. But as critical comparison begins to be exercised between these rude forms and their living prototypes a more correct and complete imitation is demanded. The comparison, however, is not made between one rude representation and another, but between the image and the reality. And this is the legitimate exercise of the critical function in the art of seeing. By making use of such comparisons again and again between the objects which are reverently regarded and those representations of them which are offered to us, we learn more and more of the truth and beauty, or otherwise, of the lines, shades, or colours by which the presentation is made. So far we cultivate the capacity for seeing the outward forms and colours of the things around us. Of course the life-long education of the hand as well as the eye, together with a certain acquaintance with the principles of composition, colouring, invention, &c., are necessary to the painter in the execution of a picture. These things, however, do not come within the range of my purpose in the present paper. I am dealing with the development of a power which may be the gift of all. To enlarge our sphere of perception, and enrich our minds with a continual acquisition of new truths, we need to cultivate a catholic spirit and to be, as Washington Allston expressed it, "wide-likers." A reverently affirmative state of mind is the best attitude for the reception of new ideas and impressions of

the beautiful things outwrought by the Infinite mind. But to the loving and wondering gaze of such an one what revelations from the Eternal and Infinite Beauty become daily more possible. For the art of our seeing grows with what it feeds upon.

Nor can anyone plead the entire absence of anything worth exercising their powers upon, even though they be confined for the most part to our treeless towns. Wherever God's sunlight gleams from the open canopy of heaven there is always material for an exercise of the love of beauty. Even our streets themselves, with their ever-varying incidents and the often unstudied picturesqueness of the passers by, form an ever changing panorama of intense interest. But is this loving and observant interest all sufficient? Are we not to read and hear what others have to say about the elements of the beautiful and the picturesque? Certainly we are to read and hear these things. Possessing, as anyone does, a very limited knowledge of things, and being gifted with reason, we are bound to exercise that rationality freely upon what others have to say from their perhaps larger experience in the art of seeing. But we must never "see with our ears." We can hear with our ears, and consider with our minds, but we must see with our eyes. When Canova, the sculptor, was told of the comparative neglect that Flaxman experienced, whilst an inferior artist was loaded with commissions, he said: "Why you English see with your ears." Alas, there is but too much truth in the accusation even in our own day. And the character depicted by *Punch* of the person who, upon entering Burlington House, asks his friend the question—"Which are the pictures one is expected to admire this year?"—is not a merely fanciful one. We may read works on art or individual criticisms of particular works, and these may or may not be very helpful to our



minds, but they certainly do not gift us with the art of seeing. But, as with every other of the fine arts, a lifetime is required for its pursuit. And the mental and physical capacities of students of the art are various. Some people are born hopelessly colour-blind; others have a very lame appreciation of form; and mentally many are imbecile. But so far as the development and true culture of the gift is concerned, I believe the fundamental principles I have laid down are absolutely necessary. I have known some even engaged in the pursuit of painting to bring back from glorious old Wales, with its magnificent hills and rocky streams and wooded glens, over which an ever-changing sky is flinging myriads of the loveliest effects—I have known them to bring back for us mere thankless records of ugliness. Now these have never truly practised the art of seeing. But with a slavish sympathy for certain treatments of other scenes by other minds, they have sought in various localities only for material on which to ring changes upon those visions of the past. They have indeed such a faith in the traditions of schools as will literally remove even mountains and cast them into the sea.

Mannerism is always a sign of narrow sympathies and consequent weak-sightedness. For with a wondering and worshipful outlook upon the infinitely varied aspects of nature, it is impossible for broad sympathies to be continually satisfied with one phase of it. Carlyle says, "We only see what we bring eyes to see." And as I have said, our eyes are largely trained by our affections. A man went from Oldham along with other holiday makers to the Conway Falls, near Bettws-y-Coed, and saw in them a grand supply of condensing water! Another man being wonderfully impressed by the magnificence of Niagara, and having married in England, would take his wife over to America to see the awe-inspiring scene. Arrived on the

spot, the husband waited for the wife's uttered appreciation of the sublime. It came at last—"What a splash!"

Though I have urged the individual application of the powers of observation and comparison, I am far from ignoring the value of the labours or the teaching of others in regard to the exposition of the interest and beauty of the works of God. As with every other art or science, we inherit the labours of others, and are better equipped for our pursuit of art or science from the help they have afforded us. Nevertheless, we cannot see with any other eyes than our own; and if we profess to do so it can only be a self-deceptive persuasion; and in art the practice resulting from it becomes an imitation merely—a work of skill it may be, but not a genuine work of art. There are certain states of mind which are inimical to the practice of the art of seeing, such as prejudice, or the intention to see something that we think *ought to be* rather than what is; indifference, which makes of the world almost a blank; and wilful blindness, which closes the eyes against every revelation of truth or beauty which it does not desire; and art critics especially ought to be free from these baneful influences. I know I am treading upon delicate ground; but it is surely true that those who would direct the eyes of others should themselves be open-eyed. And to judge of the correctness of the representations of nature he must be fully conversant with nature in all her moods. The ablest writer is not necessarily the best seer, and he who may be able to write a smart critique may be a dull seer and be very narrow in his sympathies. The man great in perception may be "slow of speech," and one whose literary abilities would never serve the interests of an important journal. The province of a critic is neither flippantly to decry nor lavishly to praise, but fairly to discover the purpose of the painter, the sentiment he would

enkindle, the revelation he would make, or the lesson he would convey; and, if the motive be worthy, to see how far and with what measure of artistic skill he has accomplished his task, and thus lead others to the discovery of such beauties or defects as may be there. Whether or not this is always the purpose of those critical notes which speak with their 50,000 tongues to the ears of a little knowing, and often, alas, less-caring, public, I will not stop to inquire. But leaving the vexed question of criticism, and turning to the non-professional multitude, we may find many instances of the adverse states of mind of which I have spoken. I even heard of a gentleman being so wedded to commercial life and its surroundings that, having his attention drawn to a magnificent sunset on one of the Scottish lochs, said, "Yes; but I would rather see Manchester flags." Again, our pursuit of the art of seeing opening before us such increasing stores of beauty and interest will awaken in us a sense of continual wonder and delight. Nay, the very same scenes or faces which have delighted us one day—if they are loveable to us—will unfold new beauties to the glances of the morrow. For the work of the Infinite, both in the macrocosm and microcosm, is inexhaustible in interest and beauty to the reverent and worshipful mind. And as the human mind is capable of continual growth and progression, so the revelations of truth and beauty received by the expanding mind are ever new.

And what a wonderful capacity for creating ever-changing scenes of beauty is indicated by the two words *light* and *atmosphere*! In them lie the very elements of expression. How often have we noticed scenes which in the full blaze of noon seem possessed of very little to be desired, if not positively ugly, become very beautiful by a mantle of tender mist or evening shade veiling or obscuring their more

ordinary or forbidding features, and giving importance and dignity to the grander masses.

And again, how often does a single ray of sunlight glorify even apparently the dullest subject, and make the very mud precious to us. I remember one winter afternoon sitting upon a slope looking down into Medlock Vale. Two men passing along the road not far off stopped at an opening in the fence, and looking towards me, said to each other, "Whatever can he find yonder to draw?" When I exhibited the picture in our local exhibition some of my brother artists said, "Wherever did you get that from, Robinson? It is a capital subject." And yet under most conditions it would have been positively bare and ugly.

Again, a friend and I went to Boston, in Lincolnshire, thinking to find something of interest ere the greens of summer had begun to mellow into autumnal shades. Having secured very comfortable quarters we sallied forth on Monday morning to begin work. A gentleman with a rather pronounced artistic headgear came from a house which we had before noticed as the abode of some one with taste. Seeing we were looking round, he said to us: "Are you going to sketch?" "Yes; we are thinking of doing so," said my companion. "I only do a little as an amateur, but my friend is an artist by profession." "Why, there is nothing to paint in Boston," said the stranger; "positively nothing! You should go to Whitby." "The church seems to come well from those abutments of the bridge there," said my friend. "Ah, no," replied the gentleman; "it never looks right. I have seen it tried from all those points. It never does well. Comes too close upon you. You can't send it back; and it looks just a big stump, which is what it is." "Well, but," I said, "there is a good subject or two at the other end of the town." "Why—yes—that is the best end of the town. There is

an old granary that is not bad—but there is really nothing in Boston.” After leaving him we proceeded to the other end of the town, to what I had thought was a very good subject—when I had seen it in the early morning grey. Alas! the glory had departed. It was absolutely unpaintable. The tide was out. It was a mass of confusion, with a ditch instead of a river, wherein was a great steam dredger at work! On we went to another scene I had thought would come out well. No—that would not do. My spirits sunk to zero as we wandered along the banks of the muddy stream, looking here—there—everywhere—but finding nothing. The day was too fine for the class of scenery—no effect. Returning in the afternoon, however, the rejected subject began to assume a different aspect. “Yes, it will do! It will improve every hour.” I set to work, and soon grew into a strong liking for it, as I saw in it both beauty and interest. The next morning was still and hazy. I went out at six a.m., and looked at the church tower. The tide was in. Beautiful! Just the effect! I began with unbounded delight, and did my utmost to realise the feeling of what I saw. The smoke from the nearly obscured town was floating towards the upper clouds, drawing a most desirable line behind the church tower. The face of nature was beaming with one of her sweetest expressions. I looked and loved! Having completed several studies, I called, on the eve of my return, upon the gentleman who had poured such cold water upon our enthusiasm. He had previously seen me at work upon one of my drawings, and was much interested in it. I found him in the midst of a collection of works of art and virtu—many of great value and beauty. Upon showing him my work—with which he was pleased—he said he was sorry I was leaving the town, and urged me to stop another week at least, as he would like to have gone out with me.

"Why," said he, "you could find plenty of material for another week." Now, he had himself considerable ability as a painter—was a man of decidedly cultivated taste, but he had lost all interest in the place. His wife, who had, I believe, done much to bind him to the town, was dead. His only son was in weak health, studying for the church, and travelling much abroad. He was tired of the place, and had no sympathy for it, hence his lack of appreciation for the beauties it afforded. The two primary principles of the art of seeing lay dormant for the time. And more than these even is required by the true sightseer—the wonder-loving look of childhood. And to the reverent spirit it is never long absent. An increase of knowledge and experience brings an increase of wonder and delight at the inexhaustible store of the marvellous and beautiful. Hence the genial freshness and, in some respects, childlikeness of the great men of fine perceptive power. As Wordsworth says:—

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky :  
So was it when my life began ;  
So is it now I am a man ;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die.

The modestly-inquiring and sympathetic soul—open-eyed and wistful—can never be satisfied with a mere momentary impression of anything really beautiful. It seeks a fuller and more intimate acquaintance. Hence the most satisfactory pictures, whether of figures or landscape, do not exhibit all their beauties to a mere surface view. And pictures, which sometimes catch our eyes and tickle our fancy by a wonderful display of smartness, or self-assertive cleverness, often pall upon our taste and become positively wearisome as we return to them again and again, in which case they fail to lead us away from the contemplation of

the painter to the higher thoughts and imaginings of the theme itself. They are hurtful rather than helpful to our growing seership. I remember standing at the window of a shop in Manchester one morning, looking for a few moments at an oil landscape painting, in the open sky of which a great coarse formless daub of paint, supposed to represent a cloud, hung marvellously in mid-heaven, when a companion coming near at the time said to me, "Strong; is not it?" "But *rather* different from *that*," I said, pointing to a cloud passing along in a similar position in the heavens. The contrast was too great. After looking at the beautiful, everchanging thing of vapour, moving along so silently yet grandly—beautiful alike in form, shade, and colour, tender and graceful, not ponderous, but majestic in its deportment—and then returning to the thing of paint, I seem to see the palette and smell the odour of the pigment. No, it was not strong, but audaciously coarse. Alas, for the art of seeing taught by such an one—it would be the blind leading the blind. I should be sorry to decry real strength. That would only argue a jealous weakness. But patiently acquired knowledge, with earnest seeking and much self-forgetfulness, go to the building up of real strength. It can never be acquired by the imitation of any form of mannerism. There is a strength in quiet tenderness more potent to move the heart than in the rudest exercise of brute force. *This* may astonish, but does not fail at last to weary and repel; but *that* woos and wins and keeps our love. Another most important element in the art of seeing is the exercise of the imagination. It forms thoughts and ideas of things into living images in the mind. There are many things both in history and landscape which are merely touched upon or suggested to the eye or mind. The imagination seizes upon them according to its powers, and fills them with such form and meaning as may be

essential to the completeness and impressiveness of the whole subject or sentiment. But the imagination of a mind which is not stored with an abundance of facts must necessarily be weak and valueless. We must be continually exercising the elementary principles of the art of seeing in order to attain to a profitable cultivation of this higher reach of it. Whilst I am touching upon this theme I will quote a few lines from Mrs. Jameson's *Memoir of Washington Allston*. "He combated," she says, "strenuously the axiom cherished and quoted by young and idle painters that leaving things unfinished is 'leaving something to the imagination.' The very statement, as he observed, betrays the unsoundness of the position, for that which is unfinished must necessarily be imperfect, so that according to this rule imperfection is made essential to perfection. The error lies in the phrase, 'left to the imagination,' and it has filled modern art with random flourishes of no meaning. Instead of saying that 'in a picture something should always be left to the imagination,' we should rather say that a picture 'should always *suggest something* to the imagination.'"

It may be said that when looking intently upon one object we distinguish but dimly, and in a general way, surrounding objects; and therefore to mark everything with photographic distinctness is not right. This is doubtless true. Still the objects are not mere shadows; their facts are potent in forming the impression of the subject. And how far they should be elaborated in the picture depends upon the part they play in the formation of the sentiment which is called forth. For instance, the scene of a dramatic incident may be laid in a wooded and rocky glen, and overhung by a lowering sky. Now, though the figures demand our immediate attention, the surrounding natural facts enter unconsciously, it may be, into the



sentiment inspired in the spectator. And it is absurd to think that that impression will be truly given if rocks are indicated by daubs of paint or putty, mere fuss for trees, or the emptying of an inkpot for a gloomy sky. Though only suggested they should, at least, be suggested rocks, or trees, or sky.

Now the power to suggest truly or interpret rightly is only compatible with a certain knowledge of the facts themselves. So that in cultivating the art of seeing I would lay under contribution every department of human knowledge which helps to an understanding of the outward aspects and general characteristics of things. For a full mind is essential to a great seer, and what stores of knowledge may accrue to the mind from the exercise of an observant eye. A Hugh Miller may read valuable testimony in the rocks in which the ordinary quarryman finds only toil and weariness. A dull observer may see in the delicate lichens only strange spots upon clumsy stones, but a Ruskin shall wax fervent in an eloquent description of those tender creatures which he sees "weaving the dark eternal tapestries of the hills," and "reflecting the sunsets of a thousand years."

But though I have urged the enlargement of our sympathies, and the unwearied use of our observant faculties, still we shall find many things in our daily experience which must be really painful and in a degree hurtful to our sense of beauty and delight. I speak not of that tenderly restful twilight

Sadness that is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only as the mists resemble the rain.

This state of mind only soothes and often refreshes us. But I refer to the positively ugly, the brutal and the mean. To dwell upon these things is to abuse the power of sight

and debase the heaven-born gifts we possess. I have seen pictures of scenes of horror which must have been gloated over with fiendish interest; the rich gifts of colour, form and composition, wedded to a sympathy for the brutal and the vile. By such an abuse of the art of seeing we become fitted only to take pleasure in the realms of Pluto. I envy not the eye which finds beauty in those lurid shades, but would rather, as Lord Beaconsfield said, "be on the side of the angels." And though, compared with their beatific vision—

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours  
Amid these earthly damps—

still it is a glorious gift, this sense of human sight. It finds delight in the contemplation of the changing scenes of every clime in every season of the year. It recognises a beneficent cycle of operations of use and beauty from the earliest buds of spring to the bleak and bare decrepitude of winter. And even this is not all gloom and sadness, for in it we see the earth casting off its worn out garments, and bracing itself up for the glorious adornment of a future spring. And I have often thought that if men generally did not stop short at the winter of human life, but looked forward to the rejuvenescence of a coming spring, we should not hear that miserable, wailing, woebegone question, "Is life worth living?" I know it is often said that there is so much of sadness in human life, but this, I think, is, in a great measure, a mistake. I would rather say it is the absence of real human life that is so sad. It is *in-human* life—brutish or bestial, in one form or another, that entails most of the sadness and woe. The great thing to be attained by a cultivation of the art of seeing is a development of the really human side of our lives. That side which claims relationship to the Divine Life, and "looks through nature up to Nature's God." So regarded, I think the art of see-

ing is a most sublime study, increasing our capacity for delight with every step of our career, realising those glorious words, "The earth he hath given to the children of men." Then, receiving it as the splendid gift of the King of kings, every phase of it becomes exceedingly precious to us; from the tiny rill that trickles down the mountain side, to the mighty ocean that receives tribute from the streams of a thousand lands—from the minutest leaflet to the grandest forests—from the lowliest vales to the loftiest summits of the everlasting hills.





## A SUMMER CALL TO THE MOUNTAINS.

BY ABRAHAM STANSFIELD.

AWAY to the mountains, away!  
Whose summits are gleaming afar!  
O why should we linger to-day,  
When the uplands are shining so fair!  
O why should we linger at home,  
When the earth is apparelled so gay!  
It is sweet through the highlands to roam:  
Away to the mountains, away!

Away to the mountains, away! .  
Where the brook makes a musical moan,  
And the bracken is kissing the spray,  
And the wildflower is blooming alone!  
Where the laverock is soaring on high,  
And is tuning a heavenly lay,  
Till lost in the blue of the sky:  
Away to the mountains, away!

Away to the mountains, away!  
Where the red deer delighteth to be,  
And the hawk is hunting for prey,  
And each wild thing is roaming so free!

Where the view stretches on to the sea,  
And the peaks rise in endless array,  
And each seems a Titan to be!  
Away to the mountains, away!

Away to the mountains, away!  
Where the holly-fern grows by the tarn,  
And the stone-break with golden ray  
Shineth out by the mountain-burn;  
Where the buckler-ferns dance in the wind  
That is roaming the upland away,  
As if truly a pleasure to find:  
Away to the mountains, away!

Away to the mountains, away!  
Let us seek for our heart's desire,  
Where the campion covers the way,  
And the mountain seemeth afire!  
Where the speedwell's heavenly blue  
Gleameth out in the light of day,  
Amid flowers of every hue:  
Away to the mountains, away!

Away to the mountains, away!  
Let us climb to the loftiest height,  
Let us find out the spot, if we may,  
Where the gentian is blooming so bright—  
The bloom that so dearly we prize,  
The flower we have sought for alway,  
With the colour of yonder skies:  
Away to the mountains, away!

Away to the mountains, away!  
Where the breezes are blowing so free,  
And the spirit of man is so gay,  
And he finds it a pleasure to be!

Though Care's at the foot of the hill,  
He will not overtake us to-day—  
For once he shall *not* have his will :  
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !  
To linger below we would scorn,  
Who have wrought through the heat of the day—  
Who have wrought through the night until morn !  
We have earned a release from toil,  
We have won us a holiday ;  
So here is an end to our toil :  
Away to the mountains, away !





R



# Four Sixpenny Magazines.

The Family Magazine  
of Instruction and  
Recreation.

THE

SIXPENCE  
MONTHLY.

LEISURE

NEW  
SERIES.

HOUR.

"We know no magazine of the kind that is generally better edited than the LEISURE HOUR, and in this volume there is the usual diversity of well-written articles to suit a variety of tastes, while few are dull, and none are of excessive length."—*The Times*.

"It is full of interest as well as instruction." *The Academy*.

"The LEISURE HOUR has made for itself a reputation which is eminently well deserved, and as a magazine in which wholesome reading is to be found, there are few publications of this day to surpass it."—*The Scotsman*.

The Family Magazine  
for  
Sabbath Reading.

THE

SIXPENCE  
MONTHLY.

SUNDAY

AT

ONE PENNY  
WEEKLY.

HOME.

"We heartily congratulate the Editor of the SUNDAY AT HOME on his success in dealing with a very difficult problem. There is a great deal of warmth and brightness about the magazine, and yet there is a simple and devout tone which harmonises with the spirit of the day."—*Congregationalist*.

"There is plenty of varied interest in the SUNDAY AT HOME, with many good illustrations."—*Saturday Review*.

The Magazine which  
every Boy should read.

THE

BOY'S

WEEKLY  
ONE PENNY.

OWN

PAPER.

MONTHLY  
SIXPENCE.

"The Boy must be of a very eccentric turn of mind who does not find something to gratify his taste in the very varied contents of the BOY'S OWN PAPER."—*Manchester Examiner*."

"We need only say that it is as popular with our own boys as ever."—*The Echo*.

"The high tone and character of the early issues have all along been well maintained, and the practical usefulness of the contents has certainly not diminished."—*Medical Times and Gazette*.

The Magazine for  
Young Ladies.

THE

GIRL'S

WEEKLY  
ONE PENNY.

OWN

PAPER.

MONTHLY  
SIXPENCE.

"The Answers to Correspondents are a cherished feature of this magazine, which in a healthy way seems to study very carefully the tastes of young lady readers."—*Daily News*.

"Prominence is given to sketching, music and all the accomplishments; nor are such healthful recreations as riding, skating, and gymnastics by any means neglected."—*Times*.

LONDON:—56, PATERNOSTER ROW.

# "BRITANNIA'S HEROES 1885. 2s. NETT. OF THE NILE."

Should be sung in every English home.—"Christian Union."

## Third Verse.

On, on, they rush—none fear to die,  
Though cannon roar and bullets fly,  
The neigh of horse and shouts of men  
Resound o'er rock, through cave and glen.  
O'er rock, through cave and glen.

## Fifth Verse.

Hark! hark! what shouts of vict'ry rend the air.  
See England's heroes, with pennon fair,  
Proudly victorious to their Queen they'll bear  
That blood-stained, shatter'd flag with love and care.  
That flag! but Gordon is—where?

GEO. ELLIOTT KENT, the Author and Composer, has pleasure in stating that Her Majesty the Queen has graciously accepted a Copy of the Song with thanks, and cordial letters of acknowledgement have been received from:—

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.  
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.  
THE MARQUIS OF LORNE.

GEN. LORD WOLSELEY.  
GEN. SIR G. GRAHAM.  
GEN. SIR F. STEPHENSON.  
GEN. SIR F. ROBERTS.  
LORD CHARLES BERESFORD.  
COL. SIR CHARLES WILSON.

COL. I. HERBERT (Camel Corps).  
MAJOR STURGEON (Postal Corps).  
CAPT. F. STUART-WORTLEY.  
CAPT. GASCOYNE (Camel Corps).  
CAPT. CRITCHLEY (Camel Corps).  
MISS POWER.

Also from nearly every Member of the Present Cabinet and from Leading Statesmen and Distinguished Members of Parliament.

Miss Gordon writes as follows:—

DEAR MR. KENT,

August 4th, 1885.

I have read and sincerely thank you for the tribute you have paid to my brother, General Gordon, and our noble and brave soldiers. The words and music are very suitable, and please me much. The following are the very last words he ever wrote to me:—

"P.S.—I am quite happy, thank God, and, like Lawrence, I have 'tried to do my duty.'"

Wishing you every success,

G. E. Kent, Esq., Hill House, Askern,  
near Doncaster.

I am truly yours,  
M. A. GORDON.

The frontispiece is richly printed in colours, and, in addition to a battle scene between British troops and Arabs, contains Portraits of General Gordon and General Lord Wolseley, with Views of the Pyramids, Sphinx, and Nile.

Copies can be had 2s. nett, from G. E. KENT, the Author, or CHARLES JEFFREYS, Music Publisher, 67, Berners Street, London.

THE SONG MAY BE SUNG ANYWHERE.

JOHN HEYWOOD, Excelsior Steam Printing and Bookbinding Works, Hulme Hall Road,  
Manchester.